

SERMONS.

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TO MY WIFE,

MRS. HARRIET BROTHERTON MARVIN,

To whose cheerful self-denial and devotion to my work; to whose rigid economy in administering domestic expenditures; to whose ready adjustment of her wants to the exigences of a meager support, in our earlier life; to whose careful and godly training of our children, in my protracted absences from home; and to the example of whose faith and purity of heart I am more deeply indebted, as a Methodist preacher, than any one except our Maker can know—this volume is

AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

I HAVE received so much courtesy at the Publishing House that I cannot forbear to speak of it.

Dr. REDFORD, ever vigilant in guarding the interests of the House, has extended to me a degree of personal kindness, in connection with the publication of the "Sermons," for which I shall ever be grateful.

To Dr. SUMMERS I owe much more than an official revision of the proof; for he has not only done his work with the most exemplary patience and painstaking, but has made valuable suggestions in some instances, of which I have, in almost every case, availed myself. His personal consideration and sympathy with my work have endeared him greatly to me.

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These gentlemen have my blessing. May the peace of God be upon them!

PREFACE.

THESE Sermons, all except four of them, have been preached, and the matter constituting the four has been preached, though not in the form in which it is cast here.

When I say they have been delivered from the pulpit, I do not mean that they were delivered *verbatim* as they are given here; for they were properly extemporaneous, only the analysis having been made beforehand, and that without the use of the pen; for I have never made even the briefest notes for twenty-five years past, except in a very few instances, when accuracy of reference and quotation was necessary.

But while it is strictly true that these Sermons have been preached, they do not reappear in the book with verbal precision. Some of them have been used frequently in the course of several years, but never repeated word for word; yet I suppose those who have heard them will see that the substance of them is preserved, and, to a considerable extent, the phraseology as well.

It is needless for me to profess a good motive in preparing these discourses for the press, for every Christian man is supposed to act upon good motives; yet, truth to tell, I

have never been quite as well satisfied with my own motives as I would like to be; for while I trust that the "love of Christ constraineth me," still, upon any deep introspection, I have occasion to suspect the presence of a subtle selfishness and vanity, from which I find no resort but in Atoning Mercy. I can only pray God that if there be the taint of any such thing in the publication of this volume, the all-saving Blood may put it away, and that the Holy Spirit may make my poor work the instrument of salvation to some who are in sin, and of edification to those who are already in Christ.

The time is short; I have done but little work for the Master, and what I have done has been but poorly done; and now that the day is far spent and the night at hand, I feel that I cannot afford to be idle. So I have put in the odd hours in preparing this book. Son of God, I commit it to thee!

E. M. MARVIN.

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SERMONS.

God in the Old Testament Scriptures.

SERMON I.

“For thus said the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord, and there is none else. I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the Lord speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.” Isa. xlv. 18, 19.

THE Godward consciousness in man is universal. Nothing is more prominent in all early history. As far back in the past as we know any thing of man, he was a worshiper. Even if the book of Genesis were not in existence, this would still be true. From prehistoric times there comes to us a mythical literature, the very spirit and essence of which is a sense of the divine—very crude and gross, unquestionably, but very distinct and commanding. Theism, in some form, has dominated the human

mind from the times when the mind gave the first intimations of itself which have reached us. In that period which constitutes the dawn of history, in which all objects are shadowy and indistinct, man is discovered in communication with the Unseen. Earth and heaven are full of invisible powers; some were beneficent, others malignant. The earliest poetry is a species of drama, in which gods and goddesses are the chief actors.

Through all modification of thought, all stages of civilization, all changes and revolutions of society, the theistic consciousness remains. It is notified to us from all places of the earth; it is found in the hut of the savage and in the halls of the university. The half-naked hunter invokes the presence of some god to prosper him in the precarious fortunes of the chase, or, by rude incantations from dusk to dawn, strives to exorcise the demon of sickness from his dying child. The philosopher, contemplating the tremendous forces of nature, worships the unseen Essence which delivers them. The Digger Indian, burrowed in the side of a hill, awes and hushes his children from the echo of some uncommon sound in the depths of the forest and the darkness. His Caucasian neighbor, collecting his household around the hearth-stone, opens his Bible, and reads, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want."

This Godward consciousness is in *every man*. The blindest idiocy scarcely escapes it. The absence of it were an unheard-of idiosyncrasy. There is no such thing as atheism in the world. A man abso-

lutely without God is not to be found; he does not exist. Many, indeed, are, in any Christian sense, "without God and without hope in the world"—that is, they have no true moral or spiritual relation to him, no inheritance of his love; but to be in absolute atheism, without God—that is, without any *thought of God in the mind*, any Godward movement of consciousness—is a phenomenon nowhere to be found. Those whom we call atheists—men who deny the existence of God—must have the *thought*, before they can deny the fact, of the being of God. The presence of this fact in consciousness is essential as a condition of the denial itself of the fact. The atheist himself, then, constitutes no exception to the proposition at first made: The Godward consciousness in man is universal.

How the fact of the divine existence comes within the field of consciousness I need not inquire. Such an inquiry falls within the domain of philosophy rather than of theology. To say that it is not in consciousness until it is brought there by some affirmation from without does not affect the significance of the fact that it is there. There is nothing in consciousness until contact with some objective fact evolves it—at least, nothing beyond the most indefinite sense of being; and it may well be doubted if there could be even that. We come to know even the *self* by contact with that which is without. Much more, that which is without must deliver itself, in some way, upon the soul before there can be any corresponding consciousness. To us the divine existence is without, and there must be some notifi

cation to us of the fact before we can become conscious of it. Whether this notification be contained in the terms of a verbal announcement, or in the intimations of a divine work, it is not necessary here to inquire.

The paramount inquiry is whether the thought itself may not be false. May it not be all just in the imagination? May it not be that there is no *fact* corresponding to this idea?

There are many false conceptions in the mind. There is no denying this proposition. How are we, then, to distinguish the true from the false? Must there be harassing and painful want of certitude in the mind with respect to all its conceptions?

No. There are facts and truths of which we are never in doubt; and, in fact, all error starts from some truth. Every falsehood is but a false putting of truth. Of the existence of matter, and of its essential phenomena, there is no doubt. Here is certainty. But in complex combinations, and where inference begins, things often get tangled and come into false attitudes in our thought. Still the phenomena—extension, figure, solidity, color, and these inhering in, or supervening upon, a substance—are *facts, true facts*, underlying all the grotesque displacements of them in our thought. So feeling, thought, volition, inhering in the substance which we name *spirit*, are subject to much false grouping, while yet they remain evermore unquestioned and unquestionable.

That which is the *basis of all thought*, then, *is true*. The mind reposes in its conceptions of these pri-

mary facts. Nothing can shake the serenity of its convictions with respect to them. It laughs all skepticism to scorn.

No more essential, in the primary conditions of thought, are the ideas of solidity, figure, extension, color, as phenomena of matter, or knowledge, feeling, volition, as phenomena of mind, than is the idea of the divine existence. Matter, spirit, God—these three words are fundamental in thought. There may be, there is, much false thinking with respect to them; but the mere idea of them, *as fact*, as existent back of all modifications of the idea in our thought, is a conviction which it takes a world of learned nonsense to disturb.

There is something objective to man answering to all that is subjective in him. The faculty of vision has its field of objective realities; so of the faculty of hearing. Below the faculties which are posited in organs of sensation there is the general faculty of knowledge, there are the affections, tastes, sentiments. All these—every thing, in fact, that can possibly be named in man—answer to, or are answered to by, something without. Now, the grandest, richest faculty in the range of consciousness is that by which we think of God. While all else within is the counterpart of an object without, does this appear without any answering fact? While every other voice within that calls upon a fact without gets ready echoes, does this one waste itself in empty space? Is the fact in which consciousness culminates the only one that is a lie and a cheat?

Men believe in God because the thought of him

is in their minds. This fact is sufficient ground of the belief, if there were no other. The universal Godward consciousness is one side of the great fact of which God himself is the other. It is the sense of our relation to the ultimate Being.

This consciousness is the basis of all religion. It is the condition of all religious thought and feeling. Some flippant men in our day, as in former times, assuming a philosophical tone, pretend a conflict between religion and philosophy. The very statement is absurd. That which makes a quarrel with the phenomena of consciousness is "philosophy, falsely so called."

That were a convenient philosophy, indeed, which should select its own facts, or which should make a theory exclusive of *any* fact, and then discredit the fact by the theory. This is just what is done by all those systems which disparage religion. A just method embraces *all* facts. The only legitimate function of philosophy is to give an intelligent statement of all facts, and, as far as may be, explain and account for them. The method which fails to account for any one of the great facts of consciousness, that is not comprehensive of them all, is, from the very failure, a false method. Nor must it explain the fact in a manner to discredit it. The fact must be honored, its integrity maintained. Facts are not to be lowered and misplaced, but handled reverently and with full credit of their significance. The philosophy that does not make room for religion, which is the supreme fact, is no philosophy, but a sham—a mere "trick of philosophizing."

This greatest fact of human consciousness and of human history is not to be dishonored by metaphysical tricksters. From the misty atmosphere of a vain conceit clouds and fogs may arise, and obscure this Mount Shasta of the facts of life for an hour, but evermore will it reappear, supreme amid surrounding grandeurs, wrapped in the white mantle of Purity, and glowing in the everlasting sunshine of Truth.

The Godward consciousness, then, must ever abide a witness of God's existence, and of our relation to him. And in this fact are given all the gravest issues of our own being. What we have to do with the Infinite must involve all that is of highest import to ourselves. It is at the highest point of consciousness that we touch on him. No other subject of thought can be of equal moment with this.

But, as I have already intimated, there may be, and as a fact there is, much that is false in human thought with respect to the combinations, the relations, and indeed the very character, of those things the existence of which is in the *data* of consciousness, and as to the fact of which there is never, nor can be, any doubt in the simplicity of a candid mind. In physics and philosophy there is a world of false thinking, though the actual *data* be all undeniable.

So, also, alas! in religion, and in reference to God. The divine is recognized everywhere, in all ages, by all men. But in what false lights is the glorious vision often set! Indeed, the imperfection of man's reason is most painfully apparent when it is em-

ployed upon this the highest of all the classes of truth. It is soon dizzy upon these elevations. Not only from imbecility, but from depravity, it suffers disqualification for the attainment of truth in this high and pure region. "Such knowledge is too high for me; I cannot attain unto it." In its depraved appetency, the mind tends to that which is low and evil. The true knowledge of God is difficult to it in its low estate.

Yet to hold the truth is essential. We take a true or false relation to any fact as we have a true or false notion of the fact. Our attitude toward any object or movement is taken from the understanding we have of it. Men often take a stand in relation to the forces of nature and of society that involves them in disaster, from holding a false view. Misconception of the nature and direction of forces, in many cases, involves ruin. Men take their attitude before God, and their relation to his government, from their understanding of the facts of his character and law. In many thousands of cases they misplace themselves, and are borne down by the infinite forces in the way of which they stand. Nothing but the "truth will make them free."

Yet it is true, from indubitable and abundant testimony of history, that it is hard for the true theistic idea to maintain a footing in the human mind. The idea is always present, but is ever taking on false forms. There seems a strong and inevitable tendency to depraved conceptions of the divine nature and character. Even where the true idea has been lodged in thought it has not maintained itself.

The tendency seems especially to be to lose sight of the unity, the spirituality, and the holiness of the Godhead.

Amongst the Jews, after the fullest expression of the divine nature in the revelations which God made to them, for many ages there was perpetual degeneration of thought on this subject. They were constantly taking up the abominable conceptions of their heathen neighbors. Their mind seemed to gravitate heavily to the basest forms of thought. They evinced the strongest affinity for idolatrous ideas and practices of the grossest character. This tendency was so prevalent and continuous that God had, at short intervals, to put forth new and terrible manifestations of himself to recover them to the recognition of his true character. Of this I shall speak more fully after awhile.

Even within the Christian era the same fact reappears. The theistic idea has suffered great deterioration among the Romanists and other sects. You cannot look into the Romish calendar without recalling the Roman mythology. Olympus comes in view, with the crowned deity upon the summit, and all the mountain populous with smaller gods. Mary has enjoyed successive elevations until she ranks well with Minerva. Prayer goes up to her at once from all places, as if she were invested with the divine attribute of omnipresence. From the import of prayers in common use, she is looked to and confided in, even more than Christ, for help and grace. A thousand saints have reached an apotheosis in which they are recognized in the ritual, their names are rever-

ently uttered, and their images appear in the house of God. The cathedral of Christian Rome is scarcely to be distinguished from the temple of heathen Rome, unless it be from the style of art in which the pictures and images are produced.

This depraved theism comes of no want of fullness or emphasis in the revelation of himself that God has given. It has its source in the inherent evil of our fallen state. It has a common root with all other sin. "The imaginations of the thoughts of the heart are only evil, continually." The cause that produces the violation of the law of God in act issues also in the violation of the truth of God in thought. There is no want of distinctness, nor of authority, in the revelation of the law; yet the law is perpetually violated. There is no want of distinctness, nor of emphasis, in the revelation of the truth; yet the truth, also, is perpetually violated.

Now, the Bible—the whole Bible—is a revelation of God and of his will to man *in his fallen state*. It is, therefore, accommodated, so far as that is possible, to the debased condition of his faculties and affections. It is designed to take hold of him in his grossness and lift him out of it: to reach him where he is, in the mud and filth of a sinful condition, with divine attractions that shall raise him and restore him to his lost estate. It is a divine manifestation, adapted, as far as possible, to his blurred vision. It is an utterance of God suited to the ear for which it is intended. It is a method of divine disclosures accommodated to man's inappetency for divine things.

This adaptation contemplates the individual man,

as far as that may be. To this end, it contemplates the race in the scope of its history. Early revelations anticipated and prepared the way for other and higher disclosures, for which the world required to be educated beforehand. Successive revelations, as the conditions of thought would justify, went forward toward their culmination in Christ. The whole preceding history of revelations was required to prepare the vision of man for the sunburst of Deity which flamed out in his advent. Nor was the preparation, even then, perfect. The failure was not in any want of perfection in the preparatory agencies, but in the inaptitude of the human mind itself, the subject of their operation. The teaching was perfect, but there was unutterable stupidity in the pupil.

Yet the failure was not complete. Amid the depravities, and downward tendencies, and stupidities of thought, perverse and vicious as it was, there was progress. Mind was in a state almost infinitely better prepared for the manifestation of God in Christ when he did come than it had been in the first ages.

The Old Testament Scriptures, then, are to be regarded as containing a system of preparatory revelations, a progressive series of disclosures, looking to Christ, and to reach their acme in him.

To think TRULY of God, so far as the capacity of thought may allow, is an essential condition of true religion. Our conception of God is the very starting-point of the religious life. If this fountain be corrupt, the taint will appear in the whole life; if

this be pure, there is an auspicious incipieney of all that is highest and holiest in the possibilities of religion.

The capital point, therefore, in the preparatory revelations, was to secure a place in the mind of man for *the true thought of God*. A PURE THEISM must be deeply rooted in the world's thought. Without this, man's religion will be but another form of depravity—another expression of the evil, the corruption, that is in him. As the first condition of every end contemplated in revelation, God must set himself clearly in man's vision. He must assert himself in man's thought. The Infinite must speak his name to us. We must hear it, and every syllable of the utterance must bring ineffable import. Out of the holy places we must hear his voice. I AM THAT I AM must become radiant in our eyes with his own immortal, uncreated light. Not in the murky light of a vitiated theory, nor through the distorting medium of a tainted and sensuous imagination, but in his own pure, eternal splendors, must we contemplate him. Then, and not till then, shall we be prepared to listen to his word; then, and not till then, will sin *be* sin to our understandings and consciences; then, and not till then, will his law convey to us its holy import; then, and not till then, will guilt and judgment overwhelm us with the grandeur of their awful meaning; then will the word salvation fall like a beneficent baptism upon our spirits, and Christ become, indeed, "chiefest among ten thousand," and "altogether lovely."

Every one who comprehends the unity of the Holy Scriptures understands the Old Testament as the precursor of the New. The dawn of the Christian day is seen in the early chapters of the book of Genesis. The "light shineth more and more until the perfect day" appears in the ascended Christ. Prophecy and ritual preintimate the Redeemer. Statement and symbol announce him. Half revealed and half disguised in typical and metaphorical representation, he everywhere appears in the Old Testament. The outline is perfect. When he reappears in the New Testament, we recognize every divine lineament, in the fullness of unveiled majesty and beauty. The introductory ages and revelations certify him to our faith. The signature and the seal are upon his credentials, and our Messiah is accredited to us beyond the possibility of cavil.

But the coming of the Son of God could have been of no avail to us if there had been no just knowledge of God himself. With a corrupt theism, faith in the Son must have been corrupt. With no true sense of divine claims, and corresponding obligations, the Saviour would have been nothing to us. The power, the majesty, the holiness of God must have been delivered upon human consciousness before Christ could *be Christ to us*.

The meaning of the Old Testament concentrates and culminates in the utterance of the name of the Most High. One word gives an exhaustive statement of the contents of these writings. That word is—God. God, in his nature, his character, his

work, his government, fills the whole sphere. Whatever else appears, appears only in its relation to him. All else is mentioned in a way to give emphasis to his name. Every voice in the Book but swells the volume of that tide of sound which bears the word Jehovah to our ears. Even Christ, as he appears in type and prophecy, voices forth this name.

What I desire to bring out may be postulated concisely in these propositions:

The design of the Old Testament revelations is,

I. TO SET GOD IN THE TRUE LIGHT IN THOUGHT.

II. TO ENTHRONE HIM OVER CONSCIENCE.

III. THUS TO PREPARE THE WORLD FOR THE COMING OF CHRIST, WHO IS HIMSELF THE FINAL AND HIGHEST UTTERANCE OF THE GODHEAD.

Following this method, I proceed to elaborate the first proposition.

I. IT IS THE DESIGN OF THESE SCRIPTURES TO SET GOD IN THE TRUE LIGHT IN THOUGHT.

There is one remarkable fact which might seem, at first, to militate against this proposition. There is no formal announcement of the existence of God in the Bible, nor any systematic statement of his attributes. There is no teaching upon the subject by a scientific method. The theistic idea was not communicated to the world through Moses; it was already in the world, with the name, and had been from the beginning. As I have already said, it was universal in human consciousness. The thought had not to be originated; but it did require to be corrected. It had in many cases degen-

erated into false forms, retaining but a shadow of the truth. It must be redeemed from its grossness. What was false must be eliminated; what was wanting must be supplied. God must become to man what he is in fact. Thought was full of error, and must be clarified. The NAME must be pronounced with an emphasis so deep and so prolonged as to enthrone it among men forever. This is what the revelations of the ante-christian period have done. The form of announcement was so varied, the circumstances so imposing, the voice of such awful majesty, and repeating itself through a period so long and so eventful, that it has inwrought itself into the sentiments and mental habits of men too deeply to be eradicated. In the written form it still remains, vindicating itself to thought, and dominating the soul with a power and a majesty which command the faith and fear of the proudest and most unwilling.

The method is not scientific—it is *historic*. The nature and character of God are not reduced to a formula, and brought thus into a single view. Such a method would have destroyed the form and effect of revelation. It would have brought the Creator down to the level of philosophy and natural science. It would have invited criticism and impaired reverence. Nor could the *meaning* of the name be brought out in that cold, logical way.

He is the living God. Disclosures of him must not be scientific, but personal. Abstraction can never show him to us. He must appear in facts. His attributes postulated in the most complete

analysis, would leave him indistinct, remote. To be to our thought what he is in fact, he must appear immanent in his works.

The method, then, in which God communicates himself is historic. He notifies us of himself, of his nature and character, in his works of creation and providence, and in his government. From the creation to the coming of Christ he shows himself to us in his work, and as he touches upon events. The Bible opens with an account of his work in the creation. In the historic method of revelation this was inevitable. He gives a simple narration of the work of creation; but how grand, how god-like, in its unaffected tone and brevity of statement! There is no display of gorgeous speech here—no place for it. God is doing his great work; let no rhetorical impertinences invite attention from him. The narrative reads to me just like God giving an account of his own work. There is no parade, no ostentation. There is no meagerness of fact, no impotency of abortive or shortcoming effect, that requires pretentious description to justify obtrusion upon your notice. The stupendous miracle of creation, the work of God, just requires words enough to set it before you. Farther speech would be impertinent.

Let us hold our breath to hear his first utterance to man: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." If you had a thousand years for the task, and access to all the libraries in the world to spur invention, and were through the whole time in the most thought-provoking situa-

tions, you could never originate a sentence such as this—so sublime, holding in itself so much matter, and withal so fitting, as God's first statement to man. I have often said, and with the utmost deliberation repeat it now, that if I had never heard of a Bible until to-day, and should open it for the first time, with the most skeptical disposition, on reading this first sentence I should become at once predisposed to receive it as a communication from God. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Surely, this is God's voice announcing his work! Nor is the first impression modified in the progress of the narration. It simply discovers the vital movement of Godhead. The eternal power and Godhead become apparent. They are brought upon the plane of human observation.

From this point forward events given in the utmost simplicity, most graphic, most life-like, arouse attention and excite interest only to make audience for God, revealing himself as he touches upon and handles the events. The fall, the promise, the wickedness of man, the anger and grief of God, the flood, the calling of Abraham, the covenant, the bondage in Egypt, the deliverance, the journey through the wilderness, and all that followed until Messiah came, are simply an historical background, on which the name and character of God appear.

When there is formal statement, and solemn announcement, of divine attributes and claims, there is always historic occasion of it, as when Moses was accredited to the Hebrews under the sanction of the supreme title, "I AM THAT I AM—I AM hath

sent thee;" or when, after the most startling events, God makes such intimate manifestation to his servant, yet not of his unclouded glory. He said, "Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live," and proclaimed himself "The LORD, the LORD GOD, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generations." (Ex. iii. 1-14; xxxiii. 8-xxxiv. 7.) The Decalogue comes to us incorporated into a history the most striking, the most impressive, that was ever written, and was promulgated amid scenic displays that turned a nation pale. Even now, after the lapse of thousands of years, with no participation of personal interest in the events of the history, we are filled with awe in contemplating the situation of the people in the desert, so lately delivered with a high hand from Egypt, and now at the base of Mount Sinai, gazing in dismay upon its summit and sides inwrapped by black, massy, moving volumes of cloud and smoke, which were agitated and parted by jets of flame; chain-lightning meanwhile writing the name, Jehovah, on the blackness, and the trumpet-blast waxing louder and louder, till it jars the mountain, while ever, at brief intervals, peals of thunder rive the cliffs, and shame all common terrors. Now and here, at this distance of time and place, we gaze upon the scene, and our spirits bow themselves down before God to receive his law.

(Ex. xix., xx.) No one can fail to see with how much greater distinctness and force the revelation is invested by the historic method.

This is an incident of our very constitution. What is embodied and organized we see clearly, and understand and remember; what is abstract seems indistinct, shadowy, unreal. We live in a world where every thing has body and shape, and our knowledges come to us through organized expression. Though we may reach the abstract and dwell in an ideal region, it is always by an effort. So our Creator, in the Bible, has approached us on the accessible side. He comes upon us in history. Yet is it a history having many superhuman aspects, and we feel that the history is divine. *It is God that comes to us. It is his voice that we hear; his hand that we see.*

The very prophecies, most of them, stand in historic connections. To this fact they owe much of their vivacity and impressiveness. They are God's words interjected into the midst of events—famines, pestilences, wars, captivities, commerce, the rise and the downfall of nations.

But the events of history, as they appear in the Scriptures, serve only as a vehicle. To note and narrate them is not the object of these writings. They are used for a great purpose. They are charged with a message to man. They bear a burden. They are laden with a word—one word—God. His attributes are hinted in them. With a solemn voice they confess his power. They reflect his glory. They evince his character. They hold

him in contrast with all false gods. They embody the true theistic idea, and take possession of the mind for it, attacking and expelling, to make room for it, every false and mean conception of the divine nature. *They are the vehicle in which God comes and takes possession of human thought.*

Having thus ascertained the method by which God reveals himself to man, let us now see what it is that he has communicated—what is the true thought, given by himself, as distinguished from all false ideas and theories of the nature and being of God. Let it be understood that I do not presume to bring out, in one sermon, all that is herein given on this great subject. Only those facts which are of most vital moment to us can be definitely stated, and the statement even of them must be most imperfect.

1. *The first fact with respect to God which I gather from these Scriptures is HIS PERSONALITY.*

To an ingenuous mind it seems strange, even startling, that there should ever have been a doubt of this fact. To conceive of God as a person seems inevitable to one who has enjoyed Christian education. Yet, by a species of metaphysical legerdemain, some men have put aside this most vital and necessary fact. This negation of the personality of God appears in two forms:

(1) The sheer impersonality of the Infinite. God is just the absolute—the unconditioned. Thus is the Supreme Being reduced to a mere abstraction. Of course it does not comport with the purposes or exigences of this sermon to attempt any philosoph-

ical refutation of this unphilosophical philosophy. I name it as one form of the false theism (if it be indeed a theism at all) against which God asserts himself in his revelations. It is not every man who uses the terms mentioned that denies the divine personality, but some push their transcendental speculations to this result, with a world of talk about "resolution of forces," and other such nonsense on stilts.

(2) Pantheism. This appears in two forms: First, in the assertion that God is every thing. Nature and man are only parts of God, outcroppings of the divine essence. It reduces all things to one. God is not a person, distinct from what we see, but is just the sum of things. Second, it appears in the assertion that God is in all things, as the soul of them. According to the first, nature and man are lost in God; according to the second, God is lost in nature.

Now, the distinct personality of God is given with the utmost emphasis in the Old Testament. It is given,

(1) In the very fact of a revelation, which requires, as correlative, a revealer. Let a man once admit a revelation from God, and it is inevitable that from that moment God must be, to him, a person. Not only so as against the impersonal theory of the absolute and unconditioned, but as against the pantheistic theory that confounds all personality in one. God's colloquy with me gives at once his personality and mine. "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." Nothing more than the recogni-

tion of God's voice is requisite to disenchant a self-bewildered mind of all the poor sophistries by which it loses sight at once of God and of itself.

(2) It is given in the fact of creation. Men may imagine eternal activities evolving new forms with inexhaustible fecundity, however repugnant to reason the imagination may be, and so flatter themselves that they have gotten rid of God. But no man can accept the averment of Moses, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," without a distinct conception and acceptance of the fact of the divine personality.

Intelligence and power are not qualities of an abstraction. We assign them to persons. It is fundamental in thought that they are attributes of a person. To deny this would be proof of insanity. We cannot think of them otherwise than as attributes of a person. Intelligence is involved in the making of a revelation, and both power and intelligence in creation. Revealing himself, then, as the Creator, God sets himself before us as a person.

(3) It is given in the fact of the divine government. He is "King of kings and Lord of lords." The idea of personality is inherent in this, as in the other facts named.

(4) In short, this idea inheres in every act ascribed to God. It is not necessary to dwell upon it. In the Bible the infinite cause is a being, a person. This stands out so fully that no believer in the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures ever doubts it. Indeed, there is no God at all if he be not a person. To name some abstraction God is in the last degree

absurd. The very instinct of worship contemplates a person, and all the attributes of personal being are distinctly and constantly predicated of God in the sacred writings.

2. The second fact is the DIVINE UNITY.

While there is intimation of a plural condition in the Godhead, it is the fact of unity that is asserted, over and over, with a precision of statement, a variety of asseveration, and a jealous emphasis, most striking and remarkable. The doctrine of the Trinity is not more than intimated in the books of the Old Testament. It came fully to light with the advent of the Son into the world. Yet while the Trinity appears in the New Testament, the unity is no less jealously guarded than in the Old. But in the writings of the ante-advent period, our Maker has taken every method of fixing this fact as a sun in the firmament of revelation.

Every one is aware of the tendency in early times to drift from this anchorage. Polytheism became almost universal. Upon every possible analysis of the divine attributes, functions, and prerogatives, the unity was broken up and gods were multiplied. Wisdom, power, justice—all the attributes, indeed—were represented, each by a separate god. The affairs of life, as war, peace, agriculture, commerce, love, and the rest, were divided out to the charge of appropriate deities. Each region of the domain of nature, as the earth, the ocean, the air, mountains, plains, was placed under separate jurisdiction. Each nation had its god or gods, charged especially with its fortunes. Each family was under patronage of

some small god. The basest passions had each its god. In fact, heathenism, ancient and modern, is so populous with gods that it is impossible to make a complete census of them. They swarm in earth and sea, in air, and fire, and sky. Between the celestial and infernal poles—from Jupiter to Pluto—heaven, and earth, and Erebus, are full of them.

The divine unity broken up in thought, the theistic idea becomes degraded at once. The carryings on of the gods of heathenism are most disgusting. They are of both sexes. Their loves, and jealousies, and intrigues, would shame the most prurient circles of modern times. They quarrel and make friends in the most pettish way. But I cannot dwell.

Each god, in worship, must be represented by an image, which shall express to the worshiper the peculiar trait of his character. As amongst the Romanists now, it is not the image to which adulation is given, so amongst the heathens of all ages. The Chinaman and the Hindoo will tell you that the image represents an unseen spirit. But the ignorant Romanist and the ignorant heathen, alike, regard the image itself with a superstitious awe. So dark, so hideous, does the theism of those who drift loose from the great, central, conservative fact of the unity of God become. This truth lost, all right thinking upon this subject is gone. The mind loses its polarity. The needle shifts this way and that, yielding to the distracting influence of scattered magnets, until bewilderment is complete, and confusion worse confounded. No conceit is too silly to be entertained, no folly too grotesque to be embraced, and

no depravity too corrupt to be indulged and relished. Every most ridiculous and basest thing is accredited with divine honors.

This is, in fact, the logical end of polytheism. A little reflection will convince you that this is so. This debased thought is not accidental in heathenism, but the inevitable result of its first falsehood.

Against all this the ancient Scriptures assert the exclusive Godhead of the Creator. "The Lord our God is one Lord." "The Lord he is God." "I am God; and beside me there is none else." "He will not give this glory to another." "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." He heaps scorn on the gods that cannot save. "The wood of their graven images" he scorches with sarcasm. "They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; they have ears, but they hear not; noses have they, but they smell not; they have hands, but they handle not; feet have they, but they walk not." Then, what a rebuke upon their makers and worshipers: "They that make them are like unto them;" as senseless and as stupid. They take a tree, and one part of it they burn, and bake bread and warm themselves by the fire; and "of the residue they make a god!"

Against all idolatry and idol gods his fiercest anger burned. He chastised his people with a whip of scorpions whenever they sought other gods, as they often did. War, pestilence, famine, the ministers of his wrath, he turned loose upon them whenever they fell into idolatry. Through all the time of the Judges they were perpetually forsaking him for Baalim and Ashtaroth, and he perpetually

whipped them back. From the reign of Rehoboam to the captivity this dreadful history was repeated over and over. The chastisements of God were at last effectual. After the horrors of the invasion by Nebuchadnezzar and the seventy years' captivity in Babylon, they never showed any tendency to recognize any other god. All usurpers of divine authority were cast out. I discover not the least trace of a polytheistic tendency after that. But by what an awful history the Creator secured his dominion!

3. *The third fact which I shall notice is the SPIRITUALITY OF GOD.*

In the Old Testament this is given chiefly in the fact of his *omnipresence*. "Do not I fill all things?" "The heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee." "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." This presence in all space, filling all things, was Spirit. If the Scriptures speak of God's hand, and his eye, as if he had bodily organs, it is to express, in a way suited to our comprehension, the fact of his operation. We are secured from misapprehension of all such passages by repeated assertions of his independence of all physical conditions. "His eye runneth through the earth." That eye is no physical organ; it simply expresses to us the fact that *he sees*. He sees in all places at once! This independence of physical

conditions is affirmed in many places. "If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee." This independence of physical conditions, this unseen presence from which there can be no flight, contain the conditions of a spiritual essence. Although it was left to our Lord to announce in terms, "God is a Spirit," yet the fact is clearly and most impressively brought out in the Old Testament. The temple-service contemplated a spiritual presence; the prophetic writings imply it. He who "doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth," is under the restraint of no physical limitations.

4. *These Scriptures announce the OMNIPOTENCE OF GOD.*

This appears at the very first in the creation. He who contemplates God as he appears in the first chapter of Genesis, can never doubt that those goings forth of power were from an infinite source. There is no limit upon the might of Him who pronounced words which orbbed themselves into worlds. "He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." He called for worlds where there was nothing, and they "stood forth!" For myself, I have no doubt that all power is resident in spiritual essences. Matter is inert. It is the object, not the subject, of power. It responds to action, but does not itself act. Chemical and vital action in matter forms no exception to this. In all these phenomena matter only submits to forces which come upon it.

Action originates in spirit. All force is lodged there. All forces are born of spirit. In the Infinite Spirit there is infinite power. "None can say to him, What doest thou?" "He taketh up the isles as a very little thing." He holds worlds in the hollow of his hand. The nations are, with him, as "the small dust of the balance." The nicest poise of the most delicate scales of the apothecary is not disturbed by a thousand particles of invisible dust that lie upon them. The weight of nations is no more to God. He is *the Almighty*.

Think of the power of Him who swings all the worlds about within himself as lightly as down floats in the air! The moon and the stars were ordained by him and the heavens are the work of his fingers—a minute production—the work of his *fingers*. "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names, by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth."

5. THE INFINITE WISDOM *is largely affirmed.*

The earlier Scriptures are radiant with this theme. Not only do they evince it in history, but set it out in abundant affirmation, and illustrate it with poetic opulence of imagery. "The Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed." "There is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it." "Blessed be the name of God for

ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: . he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: he revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him." "He that is perfect in knowledge is with thee." "He looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven." "His understanding is infinite." "There is no searching of his understanding." "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all."

The time of a sermon might be filled with quotations on this point. He that is wise in counsel is fully honored in these revelations. "He doeth all things well."

6. HE IS FROM EVERLASTING TO EVERLASTING.

The Old Testament revelations are not equivocal on this point. They plainly affirm the *eternity of God*. They discover him "in the beginning." Before ever the world was, God filled space and eternity. "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." "A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night."

Eternal in his being, he is of course self-existent. He alone has independent being. He exists of himself. He is liable to no mutations, inasmuch as he is the sum of all perfection. "I change not." "Thy years are throughout all generations. Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall

wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end." What a picture of the changeless amid the changing! Even the heavens and the earth, stable as they seem, are yet undergoing their slow mutations. But they are only the garment of God. When they are worn out, he, ever the same, shall "change them"—shall we believe?—for a new heavens and earth, another garment for himself. 'Thought stands stupid before him with whom the duration of a world is but one swing of the pendulum that marks his moments. While the machinery of a universe is wearing out, no touch of age comes upon him. When its foundations shall go to pieces, he will not feel the shock—such is infinite strength, such is the unchangeable God.

7 HOLINESS BELONGETH UNTO THE LORD.

Holiness is a word that stands by itself. Its meaning is divine. We are indebted to the religion of the Bible for any word of such import. It expresses spiritual purity and perfection far above any standard of mere morality. It may never be predicated of any man except to express a spiritual condition wrought in him by the Holy Ghost. Nothing save the indwelling Spirit of God can introduce holiness into human life. The fullness of its meaning is found only in God himself. In my classification I include in it all his moral perfections. It is inclusive of them all.

On this attribute the Old Testament is wondrously full. "There is none holy as the Lord."

“Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?” “But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.” His “name is holy.” “God hath spoken in his holiness.” “The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.” “God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.” “Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.” “And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.” “Glory ye in his holy name.” “Let them praise thy great and terrible name; for it is holy.” But I must forbear quotation.

I have said that holiness is inclusive of all moral perfection. The Bible is full of the justice, truth, uprightness, righteousness, goodness, graciousness, faithfulness, compassion, long-suffering, mercy, loving-kindness, of God. They stand in didactic statement, in poetic ascription, and in historic illustration. He appears in absolute perfection of character. He cannot lie. He can do no wrong. His ways are right. I cannot conceive of any character so glorious as that in which the Creator appears in his own revealment. He stands in the Scriptures ineffably radiant in his own holy splendors. The very heavens, glowing with celestial light, are impure in his presence; in the light of his holiness they are dark. In comparison and contrast with him the angels stand charged with folly, and cover their faces.

So, in brief and most imperfect outline, God ap-

pears in the earlier revelations. How clear, how lovely, how radiant, how majestic! This is the one only living and true God.

But the design of the Old Testament Scriptures is, also,

II. TO ENTHRONE GOD OVER CONSCIENCE.

This fact appears in the whole tone and tenor of Scripture. The manifest design of revelation is to bring man into right relations with the Almighty. It is, as I have said, but an utterance of God. Yet the meaning of the utterance is for man; it is to take effect in man; it is to master him, and bring him to his place before his Maker. That place is the place of reverent obedience and adoring love. God must be enthroned over conscience. To secure this, he is revealed,

1. AS ABSOLUTE SOVEREIGN, *having both right and power to control our life and appoint our destiny.* As such, in a thousand forms, he commands submission and denounces disobedience.

(1) He publishes a law. This law is the expression of his own character. It gives essential moral truth in its application to human character and relations. But while it postulates primary moral truth, it is also an expression of divine authority. It comes from God. It is proclaimed from the throne. It asserts the sovereign right of the great King.

(2) He enforces the law by solemn and terrible sanctions. While the willing and obedient should eat the fruit of the land, on the rebellious should come blight and mildew, the locust and the canker-

worm, pestilence and war. Fear should come as desolation, and destruction as a whirlwind. On the wicked he would rain snares, with fire and brimstone and a horrible tempest. "This shall be the portion of their cup."

(3) He invites the disobedient to forsake their way, and more than intimates a gracious administration, proclaiming forgiveness of iniquity, transgression, and sin, when they should turn to him.

2. *He expostulates with men as a Father, wronged and dishonored by the disobedience of his children.*

"If I am a Father, where is my honor?" His paternal care and claims have been outraged, so that he demands the audience of heaven and earth to the dishonor. "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me!" By such expostulation and complaint does the Infinite Father seek to recall to a filial attitude these wayward sons.

3. *He intimates a coming Redeemer, who should "bear the sins of many."* On him the iniquity of all should be laid, and by his stripes they should be healed. By "love, so amazing, so divine," he would subdue men to himself. Surely, when infinite authority reënforces itself by dying love, all hearts will bow.

By these disclosures, in the former dispensations, God asserted himself over the consciences of men.

What we have found in the Old Testament, then, so far, is that, first, *the true idea of God is given to thought*; and, secondly, *his just claim asserted over*

conscience. And this was done in a way, with a variety and character of utterance, to make it most effective. The method was historic, giving the advantage of living movement and human sympathies as a vehicle of divine truth. The events which are made to body forth this truth are grand, imposing, startling; chosen by divine wisdom to command attention and open the understanding. Nor was the movement hurried. The period was ample in duration. The stage was broad. For four thousand years, with ever-augmenting disclosures, God was delivering himself upon the thought and heart of man.

The manifestation begins with the genesis of things. The veil is drawn from over the face of the past, and God is seen at work, making all things. He shapes every world, places it, marks out its orbit, and delivers upon it the force that hurls it onward upon its path. He fills the earth and sea with living things innumerable. He forms man of the dust, breathes into him the breath of life, and sets him at the head of terrestrial creations. The enigma of the world and of life are explained. All things are seen in God. The world is held in his hand. The sun and all the stars were lighted from his fires. Forest and field vegetate from his fecundity. Beasts, and birds, and fishes, were made by his wisdom, with feet, and fins, and feathers, each suited to its own peculiar habitat. God, the living God, the eternal, the almighty, the all-wise, the Source of being, the Fountain of life, the Father of man, is the Supreme Fact of Genesis.

Lovingly he places man in the garden of delights, gladdening him with beauty, regaling him with fragrance, feasting him with fruits, and testing his filial fidelity by one prohibition. He is shown as Maker, Father, Lawgiver. The transgression follows, and God immediately appears upon the scene, calling the culprit to account, driving him from the garden, and jealously guarding from him the tree of life by sleepless cherubim and fiery sword. He degrades him from the recreative labor of the garden to the heavy toil and painful drudgery of the field. He sends him to a doubtful battle for bread, with thorns and briers, all his days. He remands him to the dust from which he came. Thus God appears in a new light—dealing with sin; so that this dreadful fact in history is the occasion of bringing upon the foreground another divine attribute—Justice. Still, it is *history disclosing God*. He is “the Judge of all the earth.” And now, also, on this occasion, another attribute faintly dawns upon our vision. The heavens, darkened into midnight over man by his sin, are touched upon the eastern edge by the dim radiance of Mercy, not yet revealed. “The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head.” There is a full-orbed Sun of mercy, somewhere below the horizon, that has sent this refracted ray upon the brow of darkness. It is written now, and here, that God is love. The writing is an hieroglyph, however, and the character is not yet well deciphered. Coming ages will bring the interpretation. *Still, the history reveals God.*

He is the Avenger of his people. Abel’s blood

cries to him from the ground, and the guilty Cain becomes a fugitive from the voice of it—a vagabond on the earth, first stained with human blood by him.

The earth has become populous and sin dominant. Righteous Noah alone stands for God. It repents him that he made man on the earth. He breaks the bond he had set upon the sea, and calls the forces of nature to heave all its waves upon the land. Fountains from below and rains from above overwhelm cities and plains, hills and mountains, in their deluge, and wash the earth from man's impurity. Yet, with a careful hand, the one righteous family is shut up and sheltered in the ark. History reveals God again—the God of providence, cleaning the earth and disinfecting the atmosphere of a moral malaria in which all virtue perished. Babel soon adds its testimony. *All this is God in history—the Holy One.*

Then Abraham appears, the friend of God. Led out into a strange land to a place provided, God constitutes him the representative of mankind, and binds himself to him by the awful formula of an oath, in a solemn covenant of redeeming mercies for the world. The Sun of mercy sweeps upward toward the horizon; the light increases. "In thy seed shall all nations be blessed." God's hand is with this wonderful man. He prospers in peace and conquers in war, but ever by the power of the Most High God, to whose priest he gives "the tenth of the spoils." Isaac and Jacob succeed to his estates and his covenant. How Isaac blessed Jacob in the name of God, and how Jacob became Israel—a prince

of God—through night-long wrestling and pain, I need not say; nor how God, through man's wickedness, led Joseph into Egypt to save the chosen family from death by famine—ever charging himself with their preservation and the fulfillment of his covenant. You know of the strange mercies that raised up Moses, and how God appeared to him in the bush that burned and was not consumed; how he sent him to Pharaoh, and gave signs and wonders in the land of Ham; how, with a high hand, he led his people out; how he symbolized his presence by a cloud-column that became fire at night, and moved before them, pausing where they should camp; and how, when they were pursued by the Egyptian army, the Presence came behind them, standing between them and their enemies, giving light from the side toward them, and darkness from the other. God made a path through the waters for them, and brought the sea back on their pursuers. He fed them in the wilderness, and clave the flinty rock to make a river for their thirst. *This was the covenant-keeping God fulfilling his oath to Abraham and his word to Isaac.*

Subdued, awed, chastened, strengthened, by this history, already smitten with Godhead, they came to Sinai in the desert. The scenery, too, impressed them. They had never seen mountains until of late. These mural sublimities awe them. Moses forewarns them of an impending interview with God. They must wash their clothes. They must not tolerate the slightest impurity upon their persons nor in their tents, for God was about to speak to them.

The day approaches. They are removed from the base of the mountain, which is to be the theater of the Presence. No man nor beast shall touch it, on pain of death. Expectation is breathless. The hour is at hand. The coming of God is imminent. The hush is perfect through all the camp. The silence is awful. *All things are waiting for God.*

There is a sound. It is the sound of a trumpet. It is the trumpet of God. How deep! how solemn! and the great waves of it sweep far over the desert, and reverberate among distant mountains. It is prolonged. It waxes louder, and louder, and louder. Still it is prolonged, still waxes louder and louder, until it shakes the mountains, and there is an earthquake. All at once the cloud, the black smoke, rolling in masses, the thick darkness, broken at intervals by a leap of chain-lightning, or an outburst of devouring flame, envelop the summit. God has come. He is on the mountain, hiding his presence in the black canopy. And now thunders of sevenfold power and loudness crown the terrors of the day.

This is no mere display. It is the symbol of power, and majesty, and justice, and is the background on which the law is portrayed. All its voices are but the emphasis of law. All its lightnings are ministers of God, to avenge the violation of his law. Its fire-jets are outbursts of the wrath that guards the law. The law itself is the expression of God's holiness. Sinai, then, *is an overwhelming utterance of God, in his sovereignty, his holiness, his justice.* This history still shows the grandness, and through it the trumpet still waxes loud till hearts

quake, and the concussion of the thunder jars men's souls to-day. *God and his law take a meaning, to us, from this history that they could not otherwise have.*

But time fails me. The journey through the wilderness, the enemies put to flight, the sun held still, the mysterious burial of Moses, the leadership of Joshua, the settlement of the land in the face of enemies, the eventful era of the Judges, the king demanded and granted, with the wonderful ritual, its priests without blemish, and lambs without spot, *make a history all full of God.* The reign of David, the grandeur of Solomon, the wondrous temple, its dedication and appointments, *still renew and augment the volume of the voice that announces God.* Then comes the downward course of backslidings in Israel, with partial repentance and still deeper backsliding to the time of the captivity; God forgotten and asserting himself in dreadful woes, forgotten again and evermore renewing the assertion, in famine, and blood, and fire, and smoke, and the confused noise of battle. All the later history of the Jews was a repetition of divine utterances, prolonged, intensified, concentrated, until at last *the meaning of his name was understood.* He laid siege to the citadel of depraved thought and idolatrous feeling, and never raised it until he made the conquest, and established *a pure theism among men.*

Then there are the Psalms making heavenly music of the name of God. From first to last, the LORD, his power, and majesty, and holiness, and mercy, and truth—all the glories of his name—his faithfulness, his care of his people, his mighty acts, his wonder-

ful ways, are the theme of impassioned poetry. The whole Book of Job culminates in the voice of God at last. The prophets are God's messengers, giving God's will and warning to men. Their sentences pulsate with his presence. I did intend to be more minute—to show how God appears in Isaiah, Ezekiel, Habakkuk, and all the rest. But I cannot. The time fails me. I must come to the end.

The Law, the Prophets, the Psalms, the History, from a thousand sources, and by ten thousand voices, GATHER UP THE MEANINGS OF THE NAME OF GOD AND DELIVER THEM TO MAN.

About the time the Name became supreme with the chosen people, they became scattered, from one cause and another, over the whole civilized world. In our Saviour's day, they were in considerable numbers in all the cities of Asia Minor and Europe, and had synagogues everywhere. The Bible-history was in them, and with it the Name it uttered. The Name, and its import, they had spread over the entire world.

This prolonged utterance through all the triumphs and woes of peace and war, the varied forms of miracle and metaphor, coming through Eden, Egypt, Sinai, and Babylon, *had cleared a place for God in thought, and established for him a power over conscience* that, in view of the depravity of man, we must consider wonderful indeed. And this was an effect absolutely demanded as prerequisite to the coming of Christ. God, in his character of holiness, and in his relation as Sovereign, *must become indubitable in thought, and in the moral sense, before the*

world could understand the mission of the Son of God.

Meanwhile, the dawn was brightening. In the era of prophecy, the Sun of mercy neared the horizon. Isaiah saw his glory, and spoke of him. *The law, the school-master, was doing his work in man, to prepare him for Christ.* Type and prophecy were doing their work, preparing his credentials.

III. THUS THE WORLD WAS PREPARED FOR THE COMING OF CHRIST, WHO IS HIMSELF THE FINAL AND HIGHEST UTTERANCE OF THE GODHEAD.

All these announcements of himself had only quickened the ear of man for a fuller utterance. These revelations, grand and glorious as they were, were only preparing man for richer disclosures. They were only accustoming the eye to light, so that the risen Sun might not blind it. They prepared the world for Christ, who himself would be, in the fullness of it, the Word of God—*another, and the final, disclosure of the Infinite to man.*

But this theme must occupy another Sermon.

God in the New Testament Scriptures.

SERMON II.

“God was manifest in the flesh.” 1 Tim. iii. 16.

IN the preceding Sermon, “God in the Old Testament Scriptures,” I stated that man, depraved as he is, required a preparatory revelation, and particularly that the depraved tendencies of human thought required to be corrected by a long course of actual manifestations of God in many forms, making a *history* in which the true theistic idea should assert itself with such power as to become rooted in the thought of the world so deeply that it must live there forever. It was imperative that the unity, spirituality, personality, and holiness of God should be established and cleared of all doubt. So God was enthroned in the thought and over the conscience of man.

But this clear expression of the theistic idea brought also into distinct relief the fact of man’s sin. As the divine holiness comes into light, human corruption stands over against it in inevitable con-

trast. Man appears in antagonism with God. In the depraved theism of mythology this antagonism does not appear. The gods—many of them, at least—were as corrupt as men; there was a fellowship of sensuality with them and their worshipers. Approach to them was not at all embarrassed by the consciousness of sin in the devotee. But the white light of holiness in which the theistic idea is set in the Hebrew Scriptures brings into disgusting blackness all the impurities of our nature. The worshiper is overwhelmed; his mouth is shut; he is paralyzed.

In his holiness God is also sovereign. His law is over us. He punishes those who violate it. We are not only impure in his sight, we are also *culprits*. His wrath is revealed against our misdeeds. We are guilty before him; we are undone. He threatens us with death, which is impending. The result is separation from God. On the throne of his holiness he is inaccessible to us. No man can approach unto him. His ineffable purity repels us. We are lost; we are shut up to despair.

Out of this despair there is egress but by one possible method. That method is,

A manifestation of God, providing a remedy for the corruption of our nature.

We have seen, in the Sermon before referred to, that in the Old Testament Scriptures such a manifestation is constantly intimated, and that the revelation then made looked to the full disclosure of a gracious purpose toward man. In other words, its object was (1) *to set God in the true light in thought;*

(2) *to enthrone him over conscience; and (3) thus to prepare the world for the coming of Christ, who is himself the final and highest utterance of Godhead.*

Wherein is this New Testament utterance more complete or higher than the Old? We have in the Old Testament the personality, the unity, the spirituality, the omnipotence, the omniscience, the immutability, the holiness, the sovereignty of God, clearly stated. He appears in the long course of its history as Creator, Ruler, Judge. The method is historic, giving the facts, not in a cold formula, but in living power. In what respect does the last disclosure transcend the former?

I answer:

I. IN THE MANNER, and,

II IN THE MATTER OF IT.

I. IN THE MANNER OF IT.

The method is still historic; but how changed, how divinely peculiar, is this New Testament history!

In the Old we see the Invisible creating the heavens and the earth, speaking through prophets, sending angels, destroying his enemies by an unseen power, hiding himself in a cloud-canopy on Mount Sinai, shaking the earth, flashing forth lightning, and uttering dread voices; we see him controlling events and working his will among nations. In all these facts he makes his name articulate with its holy meaning.

Yet, after all this, he comes still nearer to man. He comes into history in another form, more striking, more commanding. He speaks with another voice, more intelligible, and with deeper, richer tone.

He shows himself to us in a nearer view and in a new light. He becomes manifest under new conditions, which expose him more fully to our eyes.

He comes in THE INCARNATION—actually walking among us in our own form, and doing his work in the midst of us, through human organs and by our methods. He is Immanuel—God with us. “The Word was God.” “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory.” “God was manifest in the flesh.”

Certainly the divine nature did not narrow itself down to the limits of a human being. The Infinite did not take on *any* limitation. Nor may we presume to comprehend, or formulate, the manner of the union between the divine and the human natures; but the fact is before us. Here is a man doing God’s work. He does not affect to do it, *but does it in our sight*. He does it under conditions which preclude the possibility of collusion, and upon a scale that puts away all thought of human agency, with whatever advantage of contrivance or combination. One man is born blind, and, amongst his friends who have known him always, is instantly invested with the power of sight. Another was buried by his neighbors four days ago: a word rescues his flesh from putrescence, and restores him to life and to his sisters. Christ says to the tempest and to the sea, “Peace, be still,” and there is a great calm. The shriveled flesh of the paralytic rounds into ruddy vigor; the dead crust of leprosy softens into the pliant elasticity of health and youth.

He does not, like Moses and the prophets, *call on*

God to work wonders; he puts forth his own power, in his own name. In his absence his disciples invoke his name, and through them, as in the case of the old prophets, wonders are wrought. To his disciples he said, "Without me ye can do nothing." For himself, he said to the leper, "I WILL: *be thou clean.*"

Not less divine were his *words* than his *works*. His doctrine transcended all human speech as far as his acts did all human power. Officers, commanded to arrest him, on their approach were paralyzed by the words which fell from his lips. The only excuse they made for their failure, when they reported to those who had sent them, was, "Never man spake like this man." Even as we read the discourses of Christ, we see that they occupy their own place in literature, standing apart from, and altogether above, the writings of men. They came from a Mind whose intuition of divine truth is infinitely above the best results and most patient labor of genius and research. There is no labor in these discourses; they flow without effort. They are simply divine light shining from its original Source. It is not *intellection* in them that strikes you; it is light—heavenly light.

In personal dignity and purity, Christ is himself a miracle.

The eulogies of his enemies alone, so far as purity of character goes, make him more than a demigod. Men who have set themselves to discredit him before the world have been strangely awed by the grandeur of his holiness, and swift witnesses against

him have been blinded by the effulgence of his name That name! It awes men, whether they will or not; it enforces reluctant worship from malignant tongues; it is in the world to-day, both in the thought of friends and enemies, the name that is above every name.

But what touches us most nearly is that this Holy One was in our form. It is a *human finger* that touches the dead eyeball, but the effect wrought by it is a divine work. This *human voice* pronounced upon the ears of Lazarus is the vehicle of a divine potency. God works through human organs. The human and divine are united here; they are strangely one. Christ is a man! Christ is God! Yet the human is distinct from the divine. The two are not lost in each other any more than flesh and spirit are lost in each other in human personality. But flesh and spirit are united in one, and constitute a personal unit. Christ is God. I know it. His voice is God's voice; his words are God's words; his miracles are God's works. Yet is he also a man. It is not any mere simulation of human nature; it is *real*. He is my Elder Brother; he is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh.

Nor is it human nature apart from the humiliating conditions of humanity, excepting only in the fact of its purity. It was subject to all the incidents of birth, infancy, helplessness, labor, pain, sorrow, and death; it was endowed with a social nature in common with all of us. By means of this he felt all the injustice and wrong he encountered. He was sensitive to the contradiction of sin-

ners. He *felt* the indifference of the disciples toward his agony, when they could not watch one hour for heaviness. He *felt* the treachery of Judas; it was like iron piercing his heart. He *felt* the denial of Peter; it was the cowardly desertion of a friend.

He was susceptible—O how deeply!—of all the endearments of friendship. “Jesus loved Martha, and Lazarus, and their sister.”

Thus God in Christ speaks to us directly through our sympathies and sensibilities. Against this voice we cannot close our ears; its solicitations penetrate us in spite of ourselves. Godhead comes in upon us, whether we will or not. If we reject him, it must be by an effort of mad unbelief.

It is no voice from the unseen and awful abyss that speaks to us; nor is it a display of frightful portents, menacing us. It is not a movement of dread forces against us. It is an appeal to us in the form of a man, our fellow; and though it be God speaking, yet it is in a voice that does not repel.

And the utterance is not in a form that defies my capacity or transcends my understanding. A little child might receive it. It reveals the will of God in the utmost simplicity of statement, and in the most expressive facts.

In every fact that can arrest the ear, or reach the understanding, or engage the heart, this final revelation is the highest expression of the wisdom of God. It comes to man in precisely the same form and voice that touch him most deeply and win him most effectually. A man, such as Jesus of

Nazareth, so pure, so unselfish, so full of love, so free from self-assertion, doing good, doing nothing but good, loving his enemies, rendering good for evil—a man dying as he did, so dignified and self-contained in the midst of all the aggravation and insults of the mock trial, persistently loving his murderers to the last, praying for them even while they were nailing him to the cross—such a man, even if he were but a man, must command the homage of the whole world. But when he calls himself the Son of God, one with the Father, and speaks to us of our souls, of our sins, of death, of judgment, of eternity, of the kingdom of God, of the new birth—when we hear words coming out of his mouth that make our hearts burn, words that throb in us like great life-pulses from God—we feel that he has laid an attraction upon us never felt before. It is God coming upon us through human channels, and magnetizing us through those sympathies and sensibilities that open the heart of man to his brother. He comes upon us in the form of a brother, and from this vantage-ground speaks to us.

This New Testament revelation combines all that is most tender in human susceptibility with the voice and authority of God. By whatever elements of consciousness we are open to the approach of both man and God, it comes to us; and inasmuch as the Godward susceptibility is so blunted by our depraved condition, the more vital human sensibilities are made the vehicle of approach, and the medium through which our ear is quickened to the voice of

God. He comes to us on the most accessible side, and delivers himself upon our most vulnerable point.

Nor is there wanting the grandeur and majesty of the Old Testament times. The annunciation, the star of the wise men, the announcement of his birth to the shepherds by an angel whose glory kindled the heavens into a blaze, the song of celestial choristers, the words of Anna and Simeon in the temple, the angelic warning, the flight into Egypt; and later, his baptism, the opening heavens out of which in a bodily shape the Holy Ghost descended upon him, and the voice from above the cleft sky proclaiming him the well-beloved Son; and later still, the Transfiguration in the mount, his person and his garments blazing with celestial light—are facts which, if less terrible, are yet more imposing, than the Old Testament displays. Greatest of all was that darkness from the sixth hour even until the ninth hour, when the Lord was on the cross; the earthquake, and saints coming out of their graves and showing themselves to many in the holy city. These are flashes of the divine light emanating from Christ, the celestial halo about his human form.

He is every thing to us that the highest ideal and nearest brotherhood of humanity could be, with all the dignity and glory of Godhead.

It remains to consider,

II. THE MATTER OF THE NEW TESTAMENT REVELATION AS DISTINGUISHED FROM THE OLD.

I mean, of course, such matter as respects the nature and character of God.

It can scarcely be said that any new fact of the divine nature or character has been stated in these Scriptures which is not also to be found in the Old. If there is an exception, it is in the fact of the Trinity, which will be presented more at large hereafter. But in many respects the statement is more ample and distinct. God exposes himself more fully; he relates himself to us so as to give a deeper insight into his being; the voice in which he speaks to us has a richer tone and a larger meaning.

The truth of this statement will appear when we consider the teachings of the New Testament.

1. AS TO THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE DIVINE ESSENCE. In the revelations that precede the coming of Christ this essential truth is implied in the statement of divine ubiquity, rather than affirmed in any categorical manner. But our Lord said, in terms, "God is a Spirit." The woman at the well of Samaria had asserted the superior claim of the *place* where she offered worship to God over that where the solemnities of the Jewish ritual were observed. Against all *localizing* of worship, against confining or limiting it, the Lord delivered this sublime dogma: "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Not on this mountain, nor on that, is he to be worshiped with especial acceptance. Even the most enlightened Jew, in his wanderings, turned his face toward Jerusalem when he prayed. But now, henceforth, let him know that not in the temple, but in a spirit filled with contrition and

faith, God is found. He is a Spirit. He is not related to space in any limited, localizing way. He fills all space, and responds to the worship of the heart as well in Persia or in Greece as on Mount Zion. Places devoted to holy solemnities affect our imaginations, but they are not in any special way, beyond other places, related to the Infinite Presence.

Even after all the light of successive revelations men reach the conception of spiritual essences but imperfectly. They are confounded with abstractions. We must clear our minds of this. *Spirit is substance.* It is the *absolute substance.* It was before matter, and gave birth to matter. It is the depository of force, the source of all motion. It is the only substance which is essentially, of its own nature, vital, and in which is inherent voluntary power. Every spiritual existence is a simple unit, an uncompounded substance. The Infinite Spirit, the Father of spirits, in conscious unity of being, knows no limit of space. The vital, conscious personality and power of his nature are not to be sunk in scholastic platitudes. The ignorance of him that attempts to compensate its incapacity of comprehending him by endless misty mumbling of learned postulates about the absolute and unconditioned may strain its eyes in this fruitless gaze toward the limits of the Infinite until it becomes blind to the substance of Godhead, and, confused and bewildered, may miss the glorious vision of the Creator. The highest truth is not clearly seen by the intellect. There is a higher faculty in man than the understanding.

It is faith. It is by this that he is related consciously to God. He may reason with endless volubility of hypothesis and postulate, of predicate and conclusion, about the conditioned and unconditioned; but faith, transcending all this, holds intuitive communion with the Infinite Spirit—all-wise, everywhere-present, omnipotent—Creator, Conservator, Judge.

2. AS TO THE TRINITY. There is not wanting in the earliest revelations some hint of pluri-unity in the Godhead. The very first time God speaks his name to man it is in the plural form—*Elohim*. In the wonderful, formal announcement of the creative purpose, when man was to be made, “God said, Let us make man.”

God, the Spirit of God, the Son of God, appear, incomprehensibly united, incomprehensibly distinguished, in the law and the prophets. “Take not thy Holy Spirit from me.” “Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.”

But this distinction of persons in the unity of the Godhead appears much more frequently, and in a much more precise and formal statement, in the Gospels and Epistles. The very incarnation of the Son sets him, as he is related to the Father, constantly before us. He promised to send, after his ascension, another Comforter—the Holy Ghost. He commanded his disciples to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. These three appear everywhere in the Epistles, distinguished, yet united. The same power, and glory, and majesty, are ascribed to them. “These three

are one." Christ is "God over all, blessed forever more." The Holy Spirit is God; for blasphemy against him is the chief sin.

There is no effort to formulate the triunity of the Godhead. It is not put in terms of scientific definition. It enters into revelation just as the name of God does at first. It just appears in the narrative. It is not addressed to the understanding so much as to faith. The mode of it is not revealed, but only the fact.

Yet is it not, as some have foolishly said, a fact against reason. That three should be in one is not self-contradictory. It appears in many facts of nature. Not that these facts of nature can be taken as expressing in any adequate way the *mode* of the Divine Trinity. They do, however, most clearly show the possibility of the *fact*. God is Three in One.

The tendency to lose the fact of the Divine Unity out of thought was set forth in the former Sermon. We have seen how strong this tendency is, showing itself even to this day, and in Christendom. There is a strange disposition to break up and divide out the attributes and prerogatives of Jehovah among a multitude of inferior deities. It seems impossible to keep thought up to the altitude of the Infinite. In the infirmity of a depraved condition it must shade the divine glory before it can look steadily upon it.

For this very reason, perhaps, man was not ready for the fact of the Incarnation, nor for any large statement of the fact of the Trinity, until, by the

method of the Old Testament, God had held his ear for ages and ages to the statement, "The Lord our God is one Lord." At last, through the long agony of that method, the fact of the Divine Unity took form and rooted itself in human thought too deeply to be displaced. Before that time faith in the Incarnation and in the Trinity would have drifted, by a fatal and necessary gravitation, into polytheism. But at last the great fact that God is One has gone into thought under conditions to preserve it there forever.

Yet man's thought of God is inadequate. The Infinite is too remote; or, if he comes near on Sinai, the blaze blinds us. His holiness overwhelms us in our corruption. Any near vision of him pains us; a more remote, speculative contemplation of him is without practical value.

He comes nearer to us. The Son of God becomes incarnate—enters actually into brotherhood with us—and Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in infinite, sovereign power and love, at once baptize us with a sense of the All Holy.

Is it true that the conception of the Father eternal, the Son from eternity begotten, and the Spirit eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son, is a necessary condition of vital, sustained, operative faith in God? If not, why has all Christian theism that has rejected the doctrine of the Trinity been so sterile? The denial of the divinity of Christ has in all Christendom been coincident with a vapid, loose, attenuated, unproductive ecclesiasticism; while, on the contrary, where "the Head, which is Christ," is

truly held in his divine honor, there is life and power, though many and great errors in other matters creep in. You may measure the force of a Church by the character and quality of its faith in Christ.

There is a fatal drift toward pantheism (except among the Jews) wherever the divinity of Christ and the doctrine of the Trinity are denied.

There may be a truth here too deep for our philosophy, and yet unconsciously present in processes of thought, guiding the Unitarian evermore to an abstraction, and the Trinitarian to the Creator and Sovereign of the universe. The hypothesis, which I venture to believe a truth, is that in the fact of the Trinity is the essential condition of the divine fecundity, and that an unconscious perception of this determines the course of theistic philosophy, and insures the results just now indicated.

3. AS TO THE DIVINE JUSTICE. It might be supposed that the highest possible expression of the divine justice had been given at Sinai, and in the primitive history of the Jewish nation. By justice I mean the inflexible purpose of God to maintain and vindicate his most holy law, which itself is infinitely just and right.

But the Christian revelation is in advance of the Jewish, in this particular, by an almost inconceivable distance. In former revelations the issue of sin in the eternal state is scarcely mentioned. There is no clear view of the second death. Some intimation of it is certainly there; but there is no such clear and dreadful affirmation as that which the Lord Jesus and his apostles have given. We do not dis-

cover there the smoke of their torment ascending up forever and ever. The force of the divine will, guarding and guaranteeing all that is good and holy—guaranteeing it by the overthrow and destruction of sin and the sinner which assail it—as it appears in these latest revelations, has all the energy of Godhead. It is *infinite justice*. The agony of the soul-death, unutterable, unending, is the due penalty of sin; it is inevitable. By all the truth and holiness of his being, God will inflict it. “The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” No sophistry of exegesis can mitigate this doctrine. A man has no alternative but to reject the New Testament or believe it.

And it is true. Justice is in the category of first principles, of absolute truth. The necessary corollary of justice is penalty. Incorrigible sin, eternal pains—these are the correlatives of each other. But I cannot enlarge.

Yet this is not the highest conception of the divine justice which is given in the New Testament Scriptures; the final statement of it is in the Atonement.

The Son of God himself suffers for sin; he puts himself in the place of sinners; he stands before the law in their name. We might suppose that his mere *appearance* in their cause would have been sufficient. No! Even on his honored, beloved head the blow falls. Justice asserts its supremacy on his

divine person; he dies under its inflictions. He who stands in the place and attitude of a sinner must die. Not even the Son of God could undertake it and escape. This is *infinite justice*; and in it the peace of the universe finds its absolute guaranty. Disorder can enjoy no impunity, can make no headway.

4. AS TO THE LOVE OF GOD. As we owe to the New Testament the postulate, in terms, "God is a Spirit," so we owe to it also this other, "God is Love."

The love of God does not want expression in the Old Testament; but its expression is not paramount. His holiness and justice are more in view, and it is the *fear of God* that appears more as the just affection of the human heart toward him. One of his names is "The Fear of Isaac."

The Christian revelation, on the contrary, brings the love of God into supreme expression, and sanctified affections culminate in *love to God*.

But the Incarnation and the Crucifixion contain the final and the highest disclosure of the infinite love.

"God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This gives at once the *fact* and the *measure* of his love to man. This text takes us to the very fountain of the divine motives, and discloses the inner nature of God.

He who imagines that the sufferings of Christ procured God's love to man exactly reverses the order. "God so loved the world that he gave his

only-begotten Son." The advent and sufferings of Christ show us the love of God, but do not cause him to love us. His love, on the contrary, caused him to send his Son into the world, "to seek and to save the lost."

We may well believe that God loved man, for it was in him that the labor of creation culminated. I cannot suppose that there is any thing in the material universe that the Creator could have regarded as an *end* of his labor. He could hold it as of any value only as it was the basis of something higher, as it formed the residence of man. When creation was crowned by intelligent life, it began to have some worthy meaning. The Creator may now receive a revenue of conscious worship amongst his creatures; he may be mirrored in their love. The only revenue he gathers out of all his dominions is the love and worship of intelligent creatures; the only object of his love is intelligent life.

When man fell away from him the labor of creation was lost; the end for which the world was made was defeated; the revenue of love that flowed to him was alienated. Man was lost to him, and, being lost to God, was himself most miserably lost and undone. God loved him. He was the ideal of creation. The material world was created just to be the theater of his existence. All the work of creation looked forward lovingly toward him, and anticipated the moment when he should stand amid the glories of the universe self-conscious and conscious of the Creator, when, suffused with an ineffable sense of God, he should worship. But now he is

lost and undone; and yet God loves him, and loves him so that he sends his Son after him, to recover him, to redeem him, to restore him to God and to his own high destiny in God. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." The love of God in Christ appears,

(1) In the fact of the Incarnation. He comes down to us in our sin and misery, and takes his abode with us in our house of clay. Certainly he alienates nothing of his essential glory, but to our eye what a condescension is this! From the worship of angels, he comes here to be misunderstood by miserable men, whom yet he comes to save. He becomes poor to make us rich. The very fact of his coming shows us how God loved us. God sent him. "He was conceived by the Holy Ghost." "He took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham." God sent him not to the high estate of angels, but to the condition and estate of man, under the disgrace and in the degradation of a dreadfully fallen and ruined condition. "Conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary." He came into our flesh with all its infirmities, sicknesses, and pains. Not as he fills all things was he in the man Christ Jesus, but in an actual personal identity; not limiting himself by the conditions of the human nature, but entering it and joining himself to it in a conscious personal unity. He was the Son of God and the Son of man.

See him in his helpless infancy: he is the Son of God come in amongst us in love to save us. See

him in childhood, under the vexatious discipline of drudgery and poverty: he is the Son of God come to share all our humiliations that he may redeem us out of them. See him in early manhood, patiently toiling in the trade of a carpenter: he is the Son of God, come to live amongst us, not above us, but to be with us in the shop, and get our ear through the sympathies and confidences of our lowliest condition. He does not send great help from a proud distance, but comes into the midst of our miseries and lays hold of us with a mighty love.

(2) The love of God in Christ appears in the work he did on earth. All his life was love. "He went about doing good." His miracles were works of beneficence. The divine power he exerted was always in love, healing and helping man. There were no malignant miracles. The whole history of them is as much a history of love as of power.

(3) The love of God had its ultimate expression in the death of Christ. He was given up to death on our account; God delivered him up for us all. No circumstance of degradation or pain did he shun. To reach man and save him, he must go into the black depths. No holiday affectation of charity could redeem him. Awful agony of condescension and suffering alone could accomplish the end. The Saviour stood on the border of the horrible deeps where man was, and saw all the agony, and shuddered; and for one moment paused, and turned his eyes in anguish toward heaven, and cried, "O my Father!" and then plunged in.

In the horrible abyss he found—first, the betrayal,

by one of his own, Judas, for a paltry price, and with a kiss. Betrayed by the very sign of love! Think ye not that the Lord of truth and love felt himself then to be ingulfed in the lowest infamies when he was allured by the token of peace into the snare of death? He found there the dismal night in the high-priest's palace, where he was mocked and jeered through the long, black, heavy hours, till the morning itself seemed under a pall when it came. He found there the denial of Peter. In that abyss he found Pilate's judgment-seat, with the mockery of its pretense, and the horrid impertinence of patrician courtesy, bowing between Pilate and Herod, making his degradation the occasion of vapid compliments and a hollow reconciliation. Think of all this play of elaborate and elegant affectation about the Saviour in his anguish! He was dying for those very men. Then there was the crown of thorns, the points inward, tearing his temples; the mock robe, and the deriding salutation, "Hail, King of the Jews!" There was the cruel scourging, the flesh of his sacred back torn by the lash. There was the fierce, hellish glare from the mob of brutal faces closing upon him on all sides, while his mother and John look the anguish of their helpless love from the outskirts. He could call twelve legions of angels to his rescue now. "But for this cause came he to this hour." He gives himself up. That hand has waved tempests into silence—yea, it has flung worlds along their pathway—but how helpless it looks now, as those who crucify him lay the back of it against the beam, and

plant the blunt end of the nail upon the palm, and swing the heavy hammer and drive it home!

They even insult his helplessness. "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." "He saved others, but he cannot save himself."

Look on him now in the black deeps. See his pale face, and white lips quivering with pain. He is there of his own choice. Into this abyss he has come because *we* are here. All this humiliation and suffering is but the physical side of sin. He has come down here to find us and save us. *This is God's love.* He expresses it to us in the dying face and convulsed body of Christ on the cross. In this form we can see it and understand it. He sends us his message of love by a human voice breaking under its load of woe. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

(4) The only additional emphasis that *could* be given to this utterance of the Son of God *is* given in the Ascension. Having redeemed our nature, he has actually gone up with it into the highest heavens, and taken his seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high. There, in our nature, united with God's nature, he is the Mediator between God and men.

All this history of the Incarnation, the life, the labor, the sufferings, the death, the ascension, and the mediation of Christ, is but another, a more commanding, a more tender, and touching, and convincing, utterance of the statement, "God is love."

The Sun of mercy has ascended above the horizon. The light shines no longer upon the earth in refracted beams of prophecy, but in the full splen-

dor of its divine radiance. God has sacrificed his Son for us. He laid our iniquities upon him. He has borne our sins. Now God can be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. The throne of mercy is established, and sin is pardoned freely, through the blood of Christ.

The law revealed to us the holiness and justice of the one only living and true God, and we saw our own sin and guilt in this light. By it we must have been remitted to despair. God can have no fellowship with sin; but the Son of God takes our nature, and, absolutely holy himself, suffers for us; and, through the substituted pain of Jesus, the sinner who gives up his sins may go free. This revelation enhances our view of the justice and holiness of God. It gives a yet more awful splendor to the divine purity than the Old Testament does. It exalts the divine character in that particular. Even his Son, when he stands in the place of sinners, must suffer; so impossible is it that the throne of God should have fellowship with iniquity. And yet, by the atoning sacrifice, it makes the throne accessible to the contrite sinner. The Lord of life and glory has suffered for us. He has made a full, perfect, and sufficient oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. The fullness of infinite love has made a channel for itself through which it can pour itself in a baptism of life and peace upon man forevermore. He has constituted in the Incarnate One a vital point of contact—saving contact—with man. Prepared by the Old Testament revelations of the unity, power, spiritual-

ty, and holiness of God, we receive him now, more fully made known in all those attributes, yet coming down to us, grappling upon us in a wondrous manifestation in Christ, and washing us in the blood of the cross, that he may exalt us to the communion of his own ineffable life forevermore.

We see the "light of the knowledge of the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ." We see the glory of God in the mirror of a human face and form.

The spotless purity, the stainless truth, are there. The power that wields the forces of nature, that kills death and creates life, is there. The justice that visits sin with inevitable death is seen there. The love that offers itself a willing victim for lost man is there—the love that takes rescued humanity up out of hades into the highest heavens.

This manifestation of God in man sets humanity also in its true light. Nothing else exalts man as the Christian revelation does.

It shows us how God has set his heart on man. He has joined humanity to himself in the Incarnation forever. However low man's estimate of himself, in the grossness of depraved thought, may be, God has put unspeakable honor upon him. "He took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham." "He was made of a woman," and thought it not too much even to go to the cross for us.

Depend upon it, there is much more in man than the present aspects and ambitions of life may indicate. God sees the germ of a greatness in him

which, in the eternal state, will justify the dread labor of his Son in our behalf. When mortality shall be swallowed up of life, and men shall appear in the power and splendors of their celestial destiny, then "He shall see of the travail of his soul, AND SHALL BE SATISFIED." What mind can imagine the glory of man when Christ shall see in it the compensation of his agony?

Thus we see that the Incarnation was not a *final act*. In it there was nothing ultimate. It was but a first movement, to find its consummation in another. God came down to man, not for the mere sake of the condescension, but having an end in view. He touched thus manifestly upon humanity that he might magnetize it; that he might lay his attraction on it, and thus lift it to himself. God came down to man that he might bring man up consciously to God. Nor can man come to God through any other medium.

God must be met in Christ—seen in him—or else,

First, there will be the helpless, hopeless Sinaitic faith of Judaism; or,

Secondly, the vacuity of pantheism; or,

Thirdly, the grossness of idolatry and polytheism; or,

Fourthly, mere atheism and despair.

In Christ, as he stands in the light of the New Testament Scriptures, God appears in the unity of his essence, in the mysterious trinity of persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent; holy, just, and good; Creator, Preserver, Redeemer. Man, conscious of sin and

misery, sees it all the more clearly in this revelation. But the Father gives the Son; he suffers for us in infinite, self-sacrificing love, delivering the divine attraction full upon us, expressing the presence and love of God to us through human *media*, arousing our dead spiritual consciousness through the channel of human sympathies. Thus faith becomes easy, and through a human tie, a felt relationship to Christ, God draws us. We become conscious of his love. A Godward movement in ourselves responds to the unmerited mercies thus revealed to us. All the while the Holy Spirit, ministered through Christ, "helpeth our infirmities." Repentance becomes possible; self-renunciation becomes possible. The soul affiances itself to Christ, and to God in Christ, and thus comes into conscious communion with God. The creating presence of the Holy Spirit is felt. The man is created anew in Christ Jesus; he is born again, and so comes into the kingdom of God. God came down to him, and now he has come up to God. And this responsive movement is the ultimate one. This is what Christ came for—what he suffered for. He is "in us the hope of glory."

This is another revelation of God, a manifestation to his people, and not to the world. It is the personal sense of his presence and of his love; it is Christian experience. "He shall give you another Comforter," said our Lord, "that he may abide with you forever." "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

This manifestation is God in the Church, of which I cannot speak more largely now.

I conclude with the following propositions:

1. To man, in his fallen condition, his spiritual powers being stupefied, any proper thought of God, or just affection toward him, is impossible.

2. God, showing forth his power in a human form, has placed himself so near to us that actual sight, so to speak, comes to the aid of faith.

3. He has so related himself to us in Christ that he appeals to our human affections, which are quick and strong, and through them attracts us toward himself.

4. Thus approaching us on the accessible side, he offers us life in his Son. Only the most desperate hardness can resist the approach.

5. The Atonement harmonizes the holiness of God with the pardon of sin, so that to the most guilty the "throne of his holiness" is not only accessible, but inviting.

6. In the light of a gracious administration, sin and impenitency become exceeding sinful.

7. In rejecting Christ no hope is left; for the Justice that smote even him, when it found him in our place, will not spare us when we refuse to hide ourselves behind him.

8. Humanity is highly exalted in becoming the habitation of the Son of God.

9. Through Christ it becomes possible for us to reach some just thought of the love of God, and to understand that GOD IS LOVE.

When on Sinai's top I see
God descend in majesty,
To proclaim his holy law,
All my spirit sinks with awe.

When, in ecstasy sublime,
Tabor's glorious height I climb,
In the too transporting light,
Darkness rushes o'er my sight.

When on Calvary I rest,
God, in flesh made manifest,
Shines in my Redeemer's face,
Full of beauty, truth, and grace.

Here I would forever stay,
Weep and gaze my soul away:
Thou art heaven on earth to me,
Lovely, mournful Calvary.

Finally, through Christ, God becomes "the God of patience and consolation." "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." Faith in Christ takes sin away, and with it all occasion of fear. "Let not your heart be troubled." This is God's voice to us, in Christ. In him all troubles are removed, out of him all sorrow reigns; for God is, against sin, a consuming fire.

God in the Church.

SERMON III.

“If ye love me, keep my commandments: and I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” John xiv. 15-17.

I HAVE spoken of “God in the Old Testament Scriptures,” and of “God in the New Testament Scriptures.” It remains that I should speak of “God in the Church.” This is a threefold manifestation of God. The first is especially a display of the *magisterial character of God*—the dispensation of the law; the second is eminently an *exhibition of the grace of God*—the dispensation of the gospel; the third is the *divine presence*—the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. But let it not be imagined that in the Old Testament there is nothing revealed but the magisterial character of God, nor that in the New there is nothing seen but the grace of God, nor yet that the holy presence is confined to times subse-

quent to the ascent of our Lord. On the contrary, the divine manifestation in any one dispensation contains, or implies, all that is in the others. But the dispensation of the law, while it contains all that is in the others, is charged with its own especial function, preëminently. So of the dispensation of the gospel and the dispensation of the Spirit. There was the gospel, in its dawn, in the Old Testament times, and the holy presence was in the Church then; but the chief facts brought to light in that dispensation were the sovereignty of God and the sin of man. There was also the law, recognized and magnified in the ministry of Christ; but the chief fact contained in it was Christ bearing the curse of the law for man. Nor even in the days of his incarnation were the offices of the Spirit suspended; and now, under the especial dispensation of the Holy Ghost, his offices contemplate both the law and the gospel, and are but the complement of both.

The method of revelation, as we have seen in the former discourses, is not scientific, but historic. In a series of most imposing facts and striking symbols God makes himself and his relation to man known in the Old Testament. In another series of yet diviner facts, in the New Testament, he brings fully to light the fact of redemption and the infinite love in which it was conceived. But the dispensation of the Spirit is not a revelation, properly. It brings to light no new fact; it discovers no new principle; it reveals no new truth; nor does it give a larger utterance to some truth already made half audible in a former period. It gives no statement of new truth,

nor any larger statement of truth already revealed. Revelation is complete in the written Scriptures. The dispensation of the Spirit simply *evokes into the individual consciousness the things that are given in revelation*. It imports into the spiritual nature of man the matter given in Scripture; it furnishes the conditions of germination of the seed of truth in the sterile, depraved heart of man, and nourishes it into fruition; it consummates the love of Christ and the law of God in human life.

The manifestation of God amongst men is an essential condition of faith. This is more fully presented in the Sermon on "God in the New Testament Scriptures." For this reason, in part, the Son of God became incarnate; but the manifestation of God in the Incarnation was necessarily limited by physical conditions. The presence could not be universal, but only local; its diffusion could be effected only in the same manner as that of any other fact of history. The terms of its continuance were therefore limited; for there was no occasion for its perpetuity. A short life-time would serve to supply the facts in which the divine made itself apparent under human conditions. These facts, given to history, and published among all nations, furnish the basis of faith. But a saving communion with God cannot be established by this remote method of communication. We must have something more than a mere narrative of the incarnate life; we must have an *abiding presence*—a presence always and everywhere accessible. Such a presence the Incarnation could not supply, and so the Saviour said to

the disciples: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." This is the presence that shall "abide with us forever." It was this that was to come in its fullness after the Lord had ascended.

Not, as has been already intimated, that the Spirit had not been in the world and with the people of God before; indeed, he had been so from the beginning. He had been communicating the mind of God to patriarchs and prophets; he had been comforting the saints—washing them from their iniquity, cleansing them from their sin, creating in them a clean heart; but it was not that universal and plenary dispensation of the Spirit to be realized in "the days that should come." It was, no doubt, realized in consciousness by many saints; but we may believe that the sense of his presence was, for the most part, vague and undefined. In several striking cases it appeared not in consciousness, but in objective facts, which were mere symbols of the presence. The burning bush, the cloud, the lightnings, the raging fire upon Mount Sinai, the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, the luminous aspect of the face of Moses, the cloud that filled the tabernacle, the fire that consumed the sacrifice of Elijah, the awful privacy of the holy of holies—into which only the high-priest might enter, and he but once a year, and then not without blood, sprinkling the mercy-seat, which was shadowed by the wings of cherubim—the ephod, and the urim

and thummim, were all symbols of the unseen, almighty, all-holy, awful Being, whose presence they recognized, and whose name they uttered.

It may be thought unnecessary—and yet for the young, perhaps, it is not so—to guard against the deceptive sound of words. The Spirit *comes, is sent, is present*; as if there might be a *place* where he is *not* present, and to which he must come by a movement in space. These terms refer not to the relation of the Holy Spirit to space, for he fills all space; they refer solely to the relation of the Spirit to our consciousness. He is sent, he comes, and is present to us, when we become conscious of him. When he communicates with us, when he agitates the soul, when he quickens and renews it, when he witnesses of the things of God in it, then he is present. To the man whose consciousness is so occupied with carnal things that the Spirit's touches are not felt, he is absent. Let it not be forgotten, then, that these terms express the relation of the Holy Ghost not to space, but to our consciousness. From his presence in space, indeed, no man can hide, either in heaven or in hell, or in the uttermost parts of the sea.

God is, then, ever present with his people by his Spirit. This fact has been recognized by the Church in all ages; but such is the depravity of the mind, as well as the heart, of man that false notions of the most precious truths are constantly arising. Upon this most vital truth—the presence of the Divine Comforter—there has been wide-spread and deadly misbelief. The most wide-spread and mis-

chievous heresy that has appeared in the Church on this point is the doctrine that the Holy Ghost is present in the Church as an organic body—that, by virtue of its corporate character, the Church is the depository of the Spirit. The corollary of this proposition is that the ministers of religion have a certain official authority to dispense the gifts of the Spirit, in the ordinances of religion, which, being the organs of the Church, constitute the *media* of access to the indwelling Spirit, and of communication with him. This is the source of the belief in sacramental efficacy; it is this that has given rise to the doctrine of baptismal regeneration; the whole system of superstitious ritualism proceeds from it; the idea of the supremacy of the Church and the infallibility of the pope is the outgrowth of it.

The inevitable effect in individual life is to produce a superstitious veneration for the Church and the priest, a false confidence in ordinances and sacraments, and a transfer of the sense of responsibility to the Church. A man must keep on good terms with the ghostly officials who carry the keys of the treasury of grace; he must attend habitually upon the sacraments, which are the channels of salvation. With him this is religion. He is the servant of the Church, not of God; the master that he follows is the Church, not Christ; his communion with the Spirit is official, through the Church, not personal and immediate; his access to the Spirit is formal, not vital.

Such a man is apt to be a great stickler for mere

forms, and careless of the weightier matters of the law. He will be at the sacrament Sunday morning, and at the beer-garden Sunday afternoon; he will do his penances and count his beads with scrupulous exactness, but at the same time he will take the name of the Lord his God in vain; he will omit nothing of the external forms of religion, while he will be utterly careless of the witness of the Spirit.

The holy presence is not in the Church as a corporation, but with the people of God as individuals. Those who love Christ and keep his commandments are they to whom he will send the Comforter, and to whom he says, The Spirit "dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Our Lord says, "I have manifested thy name *unto the men* which thou gavest me out of the world." It is to *men*, and not to corporations, that the Spirit of God comes. It is with the individual that he deals. "What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." It was on individuals that the Spirit fell on the day of Pentecost, and in the house of Cornelius. "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" was the question put by the apostle to the disciples whom he found at Ephesus. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." "But ye

are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." "After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." "Quench not the Spirit." All the Scriptures agree in this. Wherever the Holy Spirit is spoken of, it is clear that his presence is with *men*—with individuals—not with institutions. He is in the Church as the Church is constituted of the men in whom he dwells. The consciousness of his presence in the men whose aggregate number makes up the Church constitutes his presence in the Church.

But the people of God collected together and engaged in devout exercises realize the presence of God the more by means of that fellowship of saints through which the experience of each is diffused, and adds to the joy of all; and by means also of the greater faith which is secured by the means of grace which God has ordained to this end. But this augmented sense of the divine presence is still an individual experience. The temple in which the Spirit dwells is the lowly heart. It is the man, and not a corporation, with which God abides.

But the solemn assemblies of the Church, and the celebration of the ordinances in the simplicity of faith and love, collecting and concentrating the individual experience of the several members, give an *aggregate expression* of the hallowed presence that is most imposing and salutary.

It is not to be inferred that because the Spirit

dwells in persons, and not in institutions, therefore, the institution is of little value, nor that the ordinances may be safely neglected. The Spirit dwells in us on the condition of faith, and the Church in its various functions and observances is greatly helpful to our faith, so that the spiritual life is quickened, and the divine presence abounds greatly through the Church. Yet all comes of the quickening of faith. It is not by any official administration of the gifts of the Spirit that a gracious result is wrought, but as the followers of Christ, coming together, strengthen each other's hands in God, and as the means of grace ordained in the Church quicken our faith, we come more and more into that state of mind and heart in which the Holy Spirit makes his abode. The collected utterances of his presence in the great congregation heightens the individual sense of his power and of his glory, and opens the heart by faith more fully to his coming. God, who knows our nature, has constituted the Church for this very end. He has adapted it, with all the ordinances of religion committed to it, to the development of faith in us. There are but few who would maintain a godly life through a course of years without these aids.

We talk about the spirituality of the Church, but the spirituality of the Church is, after all, only the aggregate of the spirituality of all the members. This is heightened by the associations and privileges of the Church, but it is in the individual members that it is heightened, and through them only it appears in the aggregate of the Church. There is a

social side of religion, in which we are helpful to each other; but at last each one stands for himself before God. Religion is a matter strictly personal; it is the union of the soul with God, in conscious purity and power, through the indwelling and the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost.

In this manner is "God in the Church." The Holy Spirit is in the hearts of believers, and through their consciousness he is present, also, in the congregations of his people and in the ordinances of his house. The only *condition* of his presence is *faith*, and the only *expression* of it is the *spirit of worship and obedience*. He makes himself known to his people, and through them his presence is notified to the world.

What an amazing and glorious fact is this, that God is present with men in a real and sensible communion! In the midst of life's lowliest cares and greatest sufferings, God is with us; in the most oppressive trials and deepest humiliation he comes to us, and communes with us, raising us to assured connection and kinship with the Infinite. He is our Father, and his Spirit dwells in us.

The Scriptures, especially those of the New Testament, are very full upon this great fact, and from them we learn many important points, particularly the following:

I. THE HOLY GHOST IS IN THE CHURCH AS A WITNESS.

He is called the "Spirit of Truth." As such he is a witness; he testifies of the things of God. "It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the

Spirit is truth." The Holy Spirit is a witness to his people—

1. *Of all truth.* "He shall guide you into all truth." This he does in two ways. First, as the author of revelation. I have said that the dispensation of the Spirit brings no new disclosures—that it is not a revelation. Yet the Spirit is the author of all revelation in all times. It was he who inspired the prophets and Moses; he also inspired the apostles and evangelists. Yet inspiration, like miracles, is an incident, merely, of his presence in the Church. The chief fact is neither inspiration nor miracles. We are constantly liable to be deceived by appearances, and to count that which is secondary and subordinate as the chief thing. So the apostles themselves, after a brilliant career of casting out devils, exulted in this wonderful power; but the Lord checked their ignorant triumph. "In this rejoice not, that the devils are subject unto you; but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." John the Baptist was the greatest of the prophets; but "he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." To be a Christian is a greater thing than to have the spirit of prophecy, or the power to cast out devils. The greatest of the effects of the Spirit's presence are those which are moral. The regeneration of the heart is the divinest work. All else is subordinate to this. Miracles and inspiration are but means to this end, and contemplate it as their object.

I have said that the divinest work of the Spirit is the moral effect on character, not his miraculous

gifts. Sometimes, indeed, though rarely, the gifts of miracles and of inspiration are present where the other is wanting. Balaam was yet a prophet while bent upon the most wicked purpose. There are some who in the last day will make a merit of having cast out devils and done many wonderful works in the name of Christ; but he will reject them and disown them, on the ground that they are "workers of iniquity." "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."

A pure heart is the crowning gift of the Spirit. It is this which likens men to God—which makes them sons of God. He that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than the greatest of the prophets. The slightest measure of saving grace is greater than the highest gift of prophecy. Let us not regret that the age of miracles is past, since the end of all miracles is attained by the least and lowliest of the children of God.

But to the apostles he was a witness of all-saving truth, and through them he was a witness of it to all the world. "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." "He shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and

shall show it unto you." This gift of inspiration is special, and through it the canon of Scripture was provided which is the testimony of this divine witness. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

The second way in which the Spirit leads us into all truth is realized in the experience of all the followers of Christ. He causes the heart to be susceptible to the truth which he has himself given in revelation; he opens the ear to the voice of inspiration. "The sheep follow him; for they know his voice, and a stranger will they not follow." "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine." "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." The Lord opened Lydia's heart to receive the word. "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." He gave the law; he also quickens the dead, depraved heart of man to receive it. This divine quickening produces two effects.

First, it disposes the heart to faith. The truth of the word of God becomes apparent and real to a man under its influence. The soul is put into a kind of harmony with sacred things; they become both evident and impressive to it.

Secondly, it quickens the understanding to receive the things of God. Under its influence the deep things of revelation are understood. What depths appear in the sacred writings, when we are filled with the Spirit, which we could never otherwise discover! how much we see in familiar texts that we never saw before!

2. *The Holy Spirit is a witness of Jesus.* "He shall testify of me." "He shall glorify me."

He bears witness of the coming and of the divine mission of Christ in the inspiration of the apostles, and, by their inspired testimony, to all the nations of the earth. O how this testimony commands the ears of men! Inspiration, in both the Old and New Testaments, is the voice of God bearing witness to the power and coming of his Son. Men hear the voice; no other voice penetrates them as this does; none other awes them so. They stop their ears; yet still its vibrations reach the inner depths of their being. They may hate it; but the very intensity of their hatred is in proof of the power it exerts over them. Why cannot men be just simply indifferent toward the Bible?

He also bears witness of Jesus in the hearts of men, as we have already seen, in respect to all divine truth. He opens the heart of the lowly, and enthrones the Son of God in its faith; he enlightens the eyes of the truly penitent to see him "the chiefest among ten thousand," and "altogether lovely."

3. *The Holy Ghost is a witness to the children of God that they are accepted in the Beloved.* "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." "Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us." "Hereby know we

that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit." It is the Holy Spirit that makes articulate the voice of the Father's love in the hearts of his children on earth.

"Jesus Christ, the faithful and true Witness," utters his testimony among men by the "Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost," whom the Father has sent in his name.

Upon the testimony of this divine witness we rest our case; we hang our hopes of eternity here; we put every thing at stake upon it without fear—yea, with joy; we adventure upon eternal destinies on this foundation. The voice is God's; we follow it along the edge of the abyss and in the thick darkness, fearing no evil. He is the Spirit of *Truth*—truth is his, faith is ours. His truth is the rock on which our faith rests; it reposes there with an ineffable sense of security. On this rock will we repose, and see the universe go to pieces without a tremor.

The testimony fills the hearts of believers with joy in the assurance of faith; the unbelieving it leaves without excuse; they discredit the voice of God; they harden themselves against his word; they make him a liar, and his word is not in them. If he had not spoken to them, they had not had sin; but his enlightening presence leaves them no cloak for their sin. They "quench the Spirit." They "do always resist the Holy Ghost;" as their fathers did, so do they.

"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." The first condition of faith is that

the "word of God"—the testimony of the Spirit of inspiration—should come to the ear. After that, faith depends upon moral, much more than upon intellectual, conditions. More or less learning, greater or less advantages of investigation and critical analysis, will not decide the question. If the man is perfectly sincere with himself and God, he will be a believer; he will credit the heavenly witness; he will honor the divine testimony. Whether he be educated or illiterate, with the polish of a gentleman or the coarseness of the boor—whether he be endowed with brilliant genius, or born within one degree of idiocy—the question of faith with him will depend not upon the character of the evidence, but upon his own *subjective* condition. The *objective* conditions of faith God himself has provided, and they are the best. The question now is whether he will "receive the love of the truth," or "have pleasure in unrighteousness." His pleasure in unrighteousness may be very subtle; it may be the farthest removed from coarse and brutal vices; it may be the most volatile spiritual wickedness; it may be pride of intellect; no matter what it may be—if it shall destroy that simplicity which receives "the love of the truth," it is a condition utterly destructive of faith. When a man loves any unrighteousness, it involves the love of the lie in which it consists; for all unrighteousness is the product of some falsehood. "How can ye believe which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?"

The written word and the living Church, in whose

members is the witnessing Spirit, bring the truth into a relation to the minds and the hearts of the wicked that reduces it to a mere question of volition whether they hear or forbear. Unbelief is simply perverse; it is the product of a hard heart; it comes of selfishness and enmity to God; it is the expression of the carnal mind; it is sin against the Holy Ghost, who is the witness; it makes him a liar. Even men recognize the fact that in their word rests their honor. If you make a man a liar, his character is assailed at the most vital point; he is dishonored, degraded. So men dishonor the Spirit of God when they make him a false witness. This is what unbelief does; it is the most dishonoring to God of all sin. Furthermore, that which comes to us upon the averment of the Spirit is the standard of moral right. Unbelief, therefore, repudiates the only authoritative promulgation of the law of God; it sweeps away all the divine sanctions of virtue. It is, therefore, the sin which is comprehensive of all sin.

Let men beware how they trifle with the "Spirit of Truth." In doing so they separate themselves from God; they repudiate him in the only means by which he admits man to communion with him. The penalty of such trifling is to be given over to the dominion of the lie they love, that they may be damned. See those fearful words of the apostle, in 2 Thess. ii. 8-12.

II. THE HOLY GHOST IS IN THE CHURCH AS THE REPROVER OF THE WORLD.

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expe-

dent for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."

He does not *dwell* with the world, but he *does reprove it*. His dwelling is with his people, and by his presence in the Church he is the reprover of the ungodly. His monitions reach all; his reproofs fall on the dullest ears and the most indurated hearts.

1. The world is reprov'd by the *holy living* of the Church. The self-denial, the truth, the integrity, the purity, the unselfishness, and the cross-bearing of the people of God, are a standing reproof to the wicked. A higher life is brought into contrast with their low, carnal aims. The life of God appears before their eyes to rebuke them.

The force of this rebuke is in the fullness of the Spirit's presence in the Church. Beyond question, there are some Churches from which he has almost been grieved away. His offices are not performed; his sanctifying power does not appear in the character of the members; they have ceased to be "a peculiar people;" they are not distinguished in spirit or manners from the common run of men; the men are as mercenary, the women as vain; they resort to questionable practices in the acquisition of money, and then clutch and hoard it as eagerly as the most wicked, or spend it in carnal pleasures

with as little thought of God as any man of the world; they are as eager as the most eager in the unseemly contest for lucre, and as vain as the vainest in a frivolous, fashionable display; women professing godliness go home from Church, not to meditate upon the holy lesson of the day, not to seek a closer union with God and a more perfect assimilation to his character, but to indulge in silly, perhaps even envious, criticism of the *outré* dress of a neighbor in the next pew. As the stewards pass down the aisle with the baskets, some in the very congregation are reminded of their sharp practices in trade. When the world sees a low state of conscience in the Church, it does not feel reprovèd.

I know, indeed, that the most upright men, and more especially if they be avowed Christians, will be unjustly accused and criticised. But, alas! there are some in the Church who do business in a way to shake the confidence of men of the world. Others there are who are "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." The most frivolous and fashionable are not more fond of dress or of pleasure than they. Even the form of godliness they maintain but very imperfectly—of the power they know nothing; there is no tone of piety in their conversation; God is not honored in their lives; money they spend freely on their poor bodies that will soon be dead—but by what painful methods the little that is got out of them for the cause of God is obtained! They will spend more on butterfly plumage for one party than for the support of the gospel for a whole year, with this farther difference,

also, that that which goes to the lust of the eye goes freely, cheerfully, and that which goes to honor God is parted with under a sort of protest, as if it were a great hardship.

In many places the Church "is yet carnal," so much so as to render the reproofs of the Spirit through his people almost inarticulate; yet there is still the power of God among the Churches, and there are many Churches whose candlestick has not been removed—they still shed light, reproofing light, upon all the sin that is around them. Every sinner in Christendom, after making all allowance for the carnality that is in the Church, knows men whose piety he cannot question, and whose godly life he constantly feels to be a reproof. He is convinced of sin; the contrast of himself with a true follower of God is painful; he sees that there is something higher, something nobler, to live for than money or pleasure; there is an object of existence, holy, immortal, and divine; God *does* dwell among men; he has chosen his part with the gaudy *ephemera* of the day, while his godly neighbor has attained to an immortal life. The power of this reproof is great, and many are brought to repentance by it.

2. The world is reproved by *the faith of the Church*—that faith which is of the operation of God; for all the holy living and all the true faith in the Church are the product of the Spirit.

The objects of faith are the unseen things. There is a world we do not see; it is the world of spirits; it is far more real than this outer material structure;

this will vanish away, that abides. What folly to live for the things that perish, and neglect those that will abide forever! The faith that keeps the unseen in view, that brings God within the range of vision—the faith which lifts the soul into the region of celestial light, and into the brotherhood of the immortals—is at the opposite pole of being from the life that just eats, and drinks, and wears clothes, and—dies.

3. The world is reproved by *the living ministry*. The power of the ministry is the unction of the Holy One. The men who are truly called of God to preach the gospel, and are in all things obedient to the heavenly vision, preach the gospel “in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power.” A divine energy, which is nothing else than the power of God—the very power “that raised Jesus from the dead”—goes with the word dispensed by them; it cleaves joints and marrow, soul and spirit, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. The man who has the Spirit himself preaches the word with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Then the gospel becomes the “power of God unto salvation.”

It lays bare the pollutions of the heart to itself. It shows to the wicked the sinfulness of sin, and causes them to see the plague of their own hearts. It reveals to the proud and thoughtless the fact that they are “poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked;” it shows them the horrors of eternal night; it gives them glimpses of the undying worm, and of the fire that is not quenched—at the

same moment it calls them to look upward, and sets the gates of the city of God ajar before them; it sends echoes of celestial music to their ears, and flashes of uncreated light to their eyes.

Without the ministry of the Spirit, the ministry of the word is powerless. From this it has all its awakening potency, its reproving majesty; from this it has all its authority over the conscience; from this it has the light in which sin becomes so odious and guilt so horrible. "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Christ is with his ministers, as we have already seen, not in his bodily presence, but in his Spirit.

The word of Christ is true, and he will make it good to the end of time; he is with his servants still. The pulpit has not lost its power. The word of God sounds out from the living voice of many thousands of faithful men, with the majesty of the Holy Ghost, to-day; it touches the conscience of the sinner with electric power, as of old; it brings him face to face with God.

The chief agency ordained of God in the Church, for the salvation of men, is the living ministry. In it, more than in any other organ of his utterance, the Spirit still speaks to men, and reproofs sin. Through it he is reproofing the world still, as in past ages, and will continue to do so till the end of time. The voice of the preacher will mingle with the clangor of the trumpet that shall awake the dead and announce the second coming of the Son of God.

4. The world is reproofed by *immediate enlightenment of the Spirit*. Not only through the *media* just

now enumerated, but by direct touches of his presence, the Holy Ghost convinces the sinner of sin. He is not confined to any class of means, nor to means at all; he works as he will, with means and without. He does not disregard the laws of our being; but he has direct access to the spirit of man, and, by immediate communication, arouses the conscience and renders the soul capable of a Godward movement. He lays a divine attraction upon the sensibilities of the sinner, causing the heart to vibrate, even if it will not yield. The Spirit "strives" with man; he strives with the sinner, and never, until the holy presence is outraged beyond forbearance, does a man achieve his own damnation.

"He reproofs the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."

1. He reproofs the world *of sin*.

He sets sin in the light. "Men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." It is in the nature of pollution and guilt to seek concealment; darkness is congenial to them; they cannot bear exposure; but the very shelter sin finds in concealment is the sinner's greatest danger. The false peace of concealment lures him to destruction; it soothes him into fatal slumber. The hand that drags him into the light is doing him the kindest offices; his deeds must be reproofed until he abandons them. The liar, the thief, the murderer, the adulterer, who succeeds in covering up his crime, goes on in impenitency until he falls into the pains of eternal death. Detection, though the exposure might be worse than death, would furnish incentives

to repentance; and the sinner whose crimes—at least, those of the grosser sort—have not ripened into the overt act, but are in the heart, must be brought out in a strong light by the Spirit of Truth, in order to a true repentance.

Not only the *fact* of sin, but the turpitude of it, is brought out into the light. The light causes men to see how base a thing sin is. It is the cause of all the evils that are in earth and hell; it is the soul's dishonor; it is violation of every obligation we are under to the Creator; the eternal torments of the lost furnish the only adequate expression of its guilt. All this comes into a clear light under the reproof of the Spirit; he shows men the horrible meaning of the word sin.

“Of sin, *because they believe not on me.*” We have already seen that unbelief is the sin which is comprehensive of all sin. The glory of God is not so malignantly assailed in any other way as in discrediting the holy word of the Divine Witness, and in rejecting the Son of God. Of this sin they are reproofed. If under this reproof men do not die of shame and remorse, it is because their hearts are like the nether millstone; they are incapable of shame before God, or the sorrows of death would encompass them, the pains of hell would take hold upon them.

2. He reproofs the world of *righteousness*.

He shows men the “beauty of holiness.” By nature the heart is incapable of any sense of the beauties of holiness. Only the pure in heart can see God; only the spiritually-minded can perceive divine loveliness. It is the vision of this that en-

raptures angels; but man, dead in sin, is stone-blind to all holy things till the touch of a creative finger clarifies his vision, and enables him to perceive a beauty and a glory that are not in outward things.

“Of righteousness, *because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more.*” The Lord Jesus was the perfect Exemplar of the law while he was on earth; he was the incarnate holiness. He brought a perfect righteousness into man’s view. His life was the only instance of perfect purity that ever appeared among men; but now he was going to his Father; he was about to disappear from the sight of men. “Ye shall see me no more.” While he was with men—at least, within the range of his personal intercourse—his holy presence, in contrast with their selfishness and lust, “reproved them of righteousness;” it showed them what righteousness was in human life; but now that they should see him no more, he would give them his Holy Spirit, to set righteousness perpetually before them. He admonishes them that a holy character is the consummation of our destiny; that in it is given the sum of human blessedness, and that the absence of it is the sign and forerunner of eternal woe.

3. He reproveth the world *of judgment.*

“So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” It is one of the offices of the Spirit to keep this great fact alive in the hearts of men. We must account to God for all we do. Every secret thing shall be brought into judgment; that which has been spoken in the ear in closets

shall be proclaimed on house-tops; the stealthy vices that cover themselves with the blanket of night shall be laid bare at last. The hypocrite will be stripped; his hollow professions will avail him nothing then; he will stand detected in all his infamies; he will stand before God; account will be made of all his deeds; his crimes will be publicly ascertained, and the penalty assessed. Judgment will be executed upon him—the judgment of eternal fire. It is needful that the sense of this be not wanting among men. The Holy Spirit arrays our sins before us, as in the sight of God, and brings the judgment-seat into solemn revelation; he causes us to feel that “it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” Men may harden themselves against the “terrors of the Lord;” but the ever-blessed Spirit still awakens salutary fear; he keeps the thought of judgment in the most obstinate mind.

“Of judgment, *because the prince of this world is judged.*”

Ever since the successful issue of the satanic enterprise in Eden, the devil has had great power in the earth. He has great ascendancy over the affairs of men; he is the spirit that “worketh in the children of disobedience;” he disposes of kingdoms; he has even acquired a dreadful power in the material forces of the world; he is “the prince of the power of the air.” The footing he has gained in the world is terrific.

But he is now confronted by his almighty Antagonist, the Son of God; his dreadful domination is

checked. "Prince of this world," as he is, he is judged. The consequences of his malignant assault upon the beneficent government of God he cannot escape; the horrible guilt and infamy of it are made to recoil upon him; he is judged, he is condemned, and with him all his followers. He is the father of lies, the author of sin, and the ungodly are his children. "Ye are of your father the devil, and his works ye do." Those who follow him must be judged with him. When he is judged, they must be condemned with him. They join themselves to him, and must accept his doom. The faithful Witness suffers them not to go on without warning. He still admonishes them to the last. He shows them the diabolical paternity of sin, and awakens a guilty sense of the shame and ruin that must ensue from their complicity with the first enemy of God. They sin with him, they must die with him.

These reproofs of the Spirit give a foretaste of doom. But their purpose is beneficent. They are not designed to torment men before the time, but to "lead them to repentance." These preintimations of the remorse and anguish of a lost soul are spurs to the conscience. God designs to bring us back to himself. He gave even "that woman Jezebel" "space to repent." He "is not willing that any should perish;" on the contrary, he calls "all men to repent," and to this end fills them with apprehensions of coming "judgment." To this end he opens their eyes at once to the enormity of sin and to the beauty of holiness. If Felix and Agrippa are not saved, they are left without excuse. Every

thing is done to save them short of offering violence to their personal freedom. Felix trembles and postpones, Agrippa is almost persuaded.

III. THE HOLY GHOST IS IN THE CHURCH AS THE SANCTIFIER OF THEM THAT BELIEVE.

“By nature we were children of wrath, even as others.” But this is a perverted nature. It is not nature as it was at first constituted. It is, as we may say, an unnatural nature. Holy Scripture gives us the historical explanation of this inverted order. There was a time when man’s nature was pure, when it developed in harmony with the will of God. Man’s nature was then in unison with the universal nature, and with the nature of God. But an eccentric and sinister movement of the human will, soon after man’s creation, destroyed his adjustment to the Creator, and, by consequence, the adjustment of his faculties with respect to his own nature.

In the true order, which is the primary nature, the spirit is absolute over the flesh, being itself in union with God. God delivers his will upon the spirit of man, which, being voluntarily recipient of the divine will, controls all the appetites and motions of the flesh by it. God is supreme over all, and the spirit of man is supreme over his own body and over the world. Thus were all things, through the operation of the human will, kept in conformity to the will and nature of God. The human will was the pivot on which the relation of man and of the world to God hinged; for not only man’s own relations to God depended on his volition, but he,

being at the head of affairs on earth, carried the world along with his own destinies. But the will of man, at an early day, took a hostile attitude toward God. This audacious attitude was assumed under the temptation of the devil, and the means of temptation was found in the relation of man's sensuous nature to the external world. "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat."

The "tree was *good for food*," and "*pleasant to the eyes*." It was in the relation of the sensuous nature to the external world that the means of temptation was found. The gratification of the eye and the palate displaced the supremacy of God. The tree was also "to be desired to make one *wise*." Pride of intellect is in a relation of affinity to the sensuous nature closer than one would, at first blush, suppose. Self-consciousness has its seat in the duplex nature of man—the soul and body united. When this asserts itself against God, pride and sensuality, the concentrated essence of self-assertion, will give law to the man; the world and the flesh will take the place of God. In this case the divine order is subverted; the spirit, alienated from God, is debased to the level of the flesh, and even below it; it becomes the seat of lustful propensities and brutal passions; its own desires are permeated by the steaming impurities of a prurient animal nature; it takes tone and character from its relations to the

flesh, and not from its relations to God; its propensities become "earthly, sensual, devilish;" from the pure spiritual nature of God it has become altogether alienated. What a fall is this!

The solemn and awful fact is that man is *totally depraved*.

Some persons, I know, finding in man's nature that which responds to the ideas of virtue and honor, deny the *total* depravity of his nature; but, with respect to the holy nature of God and the divine spirituality of the law, he is totally fallen. So absolutely and entirely is man gone away from God that, of himself, he is incapable of any pure desires toward his Maker. He loves the world and the things that are in the world. Even his love of virtue and honor is as he sees some worldly advantage in them. When he does right, it is from some motive that arises out of his relations to the world, not from any motive arising out of his relations to God. Right-doing is, in his case, accidental. The accident, that right-doing is coincident with the best worldly policy, explains his virtue so far as it goes. I use the word *accident* not in its popular, but in its logical, import. The fact that God has prescribed this or that is not at all the motive of his doing it. In regulating his conduct, God is not in all his thoughts. With respect to God and his law, man is totally depraved; he is under the dominion of the world and the flesh; he is carnally-minded. The very spirit has taken the taint of the flesh; it is in the attitude toward the world and the flesh in which it ought to stand toward God.

Could there be a more guilty or degrading perversion of his essential nature?

“The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God; neither indeed can be.” In the carnal condition of the mind the fact of enmity to God consists. The world is deified, and God is dishonored. When will vain man cease from metaphysical sophistries that flatter him with a conceit of virtue in himself, while he is “sold under sin?” When will he come to see that he is ruled by the god of this world, and that the imaginations of the thoughts of his heart are only evil continually? When will the stupid heart understand that it is the home of unclean thoughts? Truly, of ourselves are we incapable of one thought that will bear the inspection of God. Our very virtues spring from motives that displace God from his throne; our very moralities are a mixture of pride and policy. In the fallen condition of man God is not his God. The whole course of thought and life in his case is a repudiation of God—a practical protest against his sovereignty. The nature that is out of adjustment with God, and incapable of any effectual movement, arising out of itself, toward that adjustment, is depraved—totally depraved.

“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” In Christ, through his atonement and intercession, we are brought into a new relation to God and his law. The Atonement is the basis of a new opportunity for man. By means of it repentance and faith are made possible. On the

ground of the Atonement sin is pardoned—the pardon being conditioned on faith. For salvation is not unconditional; if it were, violence would be done to our freedom. In the violation of our freedom only a mechanical effect could be reached, and that would not be the restoration of the soul to God in the freedom of faith. It would not be salvation.

Salvation is conditional, but man, in his depravity, is fallen so low as to be incapable of a condition. The will itself is paralyzed, as to any Godward movement, and must be quickened into power before it is capable of choice with respect to the things of God. So deep and deadly is the fall. There must be prevenient grace that we may have a good will, and grace helping when we have the will.

The work of Christ, then, can be consummated only through the creative energy of the Holy Ghost. Christ came to restore the lost soul to God. He came into the world and offered himself an atoning sacrifice for our sins, and to display the love of God before the eyes of men. Being risen from the dead, he ascended the throne of mediation out of our sight. But he has sent his Spirit to consummate the work.

Salvation is the restoration of the lost nature of man to God. It is not a merely formal and official process, but personal, subjective, real. It is not the mere *imputation* of righteousness, but the *impartation of it*—the actual cleansing of the soul from sin. It is not the mere pardon of sin, but the regeneration of our nature. It is at once the remission of guilt and the restoration of the soul to God in ac-

that overcometh the world, the disenthralment of the soul from the dominion of the flesh, and its new enfranchisement in God.

In the Incarnation the divine came manifestly into the human; but in this movement there was nothing ultimate. The expression of the divine under human conditions was only a first movement; it was not a result; it contemplated something beyond. In itself, this divine movement is incomplete. The complement of it is the new birth of men. God came into expression in humanity that humanity might come consciously into God. The incarnation of the Son of God has its counterpart and object in the new birth of souls in God. Through the Incarnation the divine attraction is laid upon man that he may be raised to God; but the effect of the work of Christ appears in our consciousness only through the agency of the Holy Ghost. We required not only a *Redeemer*, but a *Sanctifier*; we needed not only the atoning sacrifice, but the quickening Spirit. Not only must the love of God be displayed, but blind eyes must be opened to perceive it; not only must *legal obstructions* be removed out of the way of our restoration to God, but *personal depravity*, also. There must be regeneration as well as pardon, the new birth as well as remission.

The greatest fact that ever took place on the earth was God coming to man in the incarnation of the Son. Second only to that is man coming to God, through the work of the Holy Ghost, in the new birth. The new birth of a soul in God! Man emerging out of the littlenesses and the filth of a carnal

condition into the dignity, the liberty, the holiness of the sons of God! Bursting open the prison-doors of the world and the flesh, the spirit finds itself invested with the freedom of the universe, and finds the sweep of its liberties commensurate with omnipresence!

Why is the work of grace in Christian experience denominated a birth? Our Lord said, "Except a man be *born* of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Why this metaphor of a birth to express the fact of a man's entrance into the kingdom of God? We shall not have far to go for the reason. Every birth is the beginning of a new life. The restoration of the soul to God is nothing short of this. There is a new *life*. It is the *divine* life—the life of God in the soul.

"God is love." This is the essence of his moral nature. The new birth is "the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." So immediate, so vital, is the union of God's people with him.

The power by which this change from a carnal to a spiritual state, from the love of the world to the love of God, is effected is the Holy Ghost. The agency of the Spirit in this work is *immediate*. It is true, indeed, that much is accomplished by him through means. Men are enlightened through the means of the *word*, written or spoken. Attention is aroused by exhortations, providential occurrences, warnings, and many other means. Motives are appealed to in a thousand different ways, to arouse men to repentance, and to awaken concern. All

these means are made efficient by the Spirit, in his direct agency; and the actual transformation of character—the new creation—is the immediate work of God. “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.” It is an exertion of divine power to be prayed for, not just to be sought through certain prescribed *media*; it is the voluntary exertion of immediate power upon the soul by the Holy Spirit.

This power is not a mechanical force; it is not exerted in a way to do violence to our freedom; it is never wrought but in concurrence with our own will. None are born again until they “turn to God.” The heart opens itself to God, and invites the Spirit of holiness to come in; but the heart opening itself to God is the result of a previous work of the Spirit; for there is a wonderful concurrence of divine grace and human will in the entire process of repentance. Indeed, from the dawn to the consummation of the work of salvation, the Spirit’s power on one side is responded to by a consenting will on the other. One stage of the advance prepares the heart and leads it to anticipate in prayer the next. Prayer is of the essence of repentance—prayer for a clean heart. “Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.” Though the work is wrought in us by the Spirit of God, yet no violence is done to our essential nature. Only its depravities are corrected, its impurities washed away; it is restored to its primal integrity; it is brought into the brotherhood of the holy.

Let those who imagine that the work of the Spirit is realized only through the medium of the word and ordinances consider the plain words of our Lord: "If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Those who "believe on his name" are "born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." "Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." "The power that worketh in us" is the same power by which God "raised up Jesus from the dead."

The life that is in the believer is wrought in him by the power of God. This is a mystery, you say. Yea, doubtless, a heavenly mystery. You repeat Nicodemus's question, "How can these things be?" The carnal heart has been ever asking that question over and over. You profess that you can understand how, if a man does his duty, God will receive him, but that you cannot understand the new birth. I know it; I know it well. You are ready to go about to establish your own righteousness; but to the righteousness of God you are not ready to submit. Your poor, proud heart maintains its pitiful

rebellion against God and his methods; but you are depraved; your heart is corrupt, and unless you are washed, cleansed, sanctified, by the "renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour," you are lost. You can never "see God" until you are made "pure in heart," and the heart can be changed only by the God who made it.

But what a wonder is this, that a nature so gross and polluted should be at last brought to the heights of his holiness, and introduced, without shame, into heaven itself! "Such wonders God hath wrought." Jesus our Lord will present the Church, without "spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," "faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy." This is his work, and it is marvelous in our eyes; this is the work that is being wrought in the earth now. The Paraclete is in the Church. Human souls even now on earth, washed by him in the blood of the Lamb, show forth his praises by a conversation that is in heaven. There is much imperfection in the Church; there are hypocrites, here and there; the world, ever and anon, comes in like a flood; yet is he here—the Spirit, the blessed Comforter—antagonizing the powers of darkness, and bringing in the light of God. He is purging the Church; and, amid all the corruptions of the times, souls are passing through the refining fires of his love, and becoming "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." Perpetually they are witnessing among men his power to kill and to make alive. With the sustained emphasis

of a holy life, thousands on earth are showing forth the praises of him who has called them from darkness into his marvelous light, and from the power of Satan to serve the living God. Perpetually, from his new creation, they are ascending the starry pathway, and entering in through the gates into the city. There they are, the saved of the Lord, clustering around the King in his beauty, in the land of light, and chanting evermore, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." This is the work of Christ, effectuated by the presence and power of the Holy Ghost in the Church. He is the sanctifier; he is with men even now. Let us beware lest we grieve the Holy Spirit; if once he abandon us, our portion is death.

Thus is fulfilled the prophecy, "He shall sit as a refiner's fire, and as a purifier of silver." All dross and base metals he separates from the nature of his people, leaving there only the pure silver. Thus, also, is fulfilled the declaration of the last and greatest of all the prophets, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." To be pure in heart is the true glory of intelligent life. To this God raises his people through the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost; he fulfills the good pleasure of his goodness in us, and the work of faith with power. It is the almighty Spirit who has the work in hand; the work is divine. The effect is not partial, except as infinite beneficence may be resisted by the per-

verse subject of its saving agencies. If we open ourselves fully to God, he cuts the work short in righteousness, so that his will is done by us on earth as it is done in heaven; and human character, even before death, becomes refulgent with celestial light. "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." This is our "high calling." To this we aspire in Christ Jesus our Lord. The infusion of his righteousness by the coming of his Spirit is the assured effect of faith in his name. His people walk with him in white, even here, keeping their garments unspotted from the world. He is in the Church, a sanctifying presence.

IV THE HOLY GHOST IS IN THE CHURCH AS THE COMFORTER OF HIS PEOPLE.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you." "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world."

With words such as these did our Lord soothe and comfort his disciples in the dark hour when he was about to be parted from them. The great sorrow was coming upon him. It was now after night-fall, and on the morrow he would be crucified. The shadow of the cross was already upon his soul; he had told the disciples that he would soon be parted

from them, and that they should see him no more; he had been the light of their life; his presence had been their joy; he had kindled strange hopes in them; to be abandoned by him now was more than they could bear; their hopes were blighted; how cold, how insipid, how blank the world would be now without him! their hearts were heavy; the sorrowful tone of his own spirit added to their grief; they needed a comforter, and he, under a sorrow ten thousand-fold greater than theirs, in self-forgetting love, turned to them and poured divine consolation upon their souls; he spoke words of peace, he assured them of his love, he promised the Comforter, who should come when he had ascended; and even now he breathed on them, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

One, and a principal, office of the Holy Spirit in the Church is that of *the Comforter*. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem." God takes pleasure in the happiness of those who serve him. It is his pleasure that they shall "find rest to their souls." He does indeed chastise, but it is not for the sake of the suffering; it is for our profit. He looks to our highest ultimate welfare. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." Like a wise father, he gratifies his children, when it may be safely done. When the gratification would ruin them he withholds it, but always for their sake, that they may be saved. If he withholds an apparent present good, it is that

he may confer a real and eternal good hereafter. Evermore it is to the happiness of his chosen that his work tends. Toward this all things tend. His covenant with them stipulates this, and is "well-ordered and sure in all things." The covenant itself is founded upon his everlasting love. "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer." "Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted."

1. The people of God are comforted by *the removal of the cause of all misery.*

Sin is the malignant root of suffering. All the unrest, the fear, the remorse, that are in the world have been introduced by sin. Alienation from God has unsettled the soul from its equilibrium—has loosened it from its safe moorings, and set it adrift upon a stormy sea. Governed not by stable law, but by lawless passion, it drives painfully to its wreck. He who would cure the woes of humanity must cure its sin; he who would save it from anguish must save it from corruption. The stream must be purified in the fountain; the tree must be made good if there is to be good fruit. It is through his work as the sanctifier that the Holy Spirit becomes the Comforter. He offers no arbitrary, empirical relief. He *eradicates* evil—takes it up by the roots; he digs it up out of the soil. "The work

of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever." The kingdom of God is "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." The first condition is *righteousness*. Only in *that* can there be peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. "There is *no* peace to the wicked, saith my God." He takes away sorrow by taking away sin.

Let no one dare seek the comfort of the Holy Spirit who cherishes some secret sin. There must be no pretense; there must be thorough work made of repentance; the "dearest idol," the "bosom sin," must be sacrificed. Sin is the disturbing force in the spiritual sphere; in it there can be no rest. Seek purity, then peace will come of itself; seek a holy heart, for all blessedness is found in that. Only in purity of heart can there be communion with God, and in communion with God alone is there a satisfying portion.

As we have seen before, this purification of the soul, which brings it into harmony with the will and attributes of God, is the work of the Spirit. Nothing short of creative power can restore the soul; nothing short of this can purge it of its sin.

Not that all troubles cease at the moment of the new birth, nor even in the highest states of experience in the present life. Far from it. "In the world ye shall have tribulation." There is often a great fight of affliction to be maintained even in the most mature state of experience. But *with the pain* there is also peace. The very pain is sweetened by the love of God, which is deeper and stronger

than it. God quiets and hushes his suffering child, and the very anguish makes it more sensitive to his caresses.

Labor is rest and pain is sweet,
If thou, my God, art there.

Beyond this his sanctifying presence is fitting us for another stage of being, near at hand, in which "there shall be no more pain." We must be removed from this earth, which is the home of sin, before we can be delivered from all the effects of sin. While we are yet upon the field of battle, though victorious, we must still endure the discomforts of the campaign; but the victory prepares the soldier for the triumph and the repose that are to follow. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." "And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them."

2. The people of God are comforted *by the assurance of faith*.

Through faith the Holy Spirit works in them a divine certainty of unseen things. Religion is no mere speculation. The kingdom of God cometh not with observation, *but is within*. Life is deepened, almost infinitely, in this sense of divine things; both the successes and defeats of this life become insignificant. With one foot upon the threshold of eternity, with the voices of the seraphim in his ear, and the light of God blazing on all sides, what do the discomforts of a day signify? When religion has

possession of a man—when thought and feeling are full of it—the joy of God exalts the soul so that a holy radiance tinges and brightens the lowliest and most unhappy conditions. “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

Nor is there only this general sense of the unseen; there is also a particular sense of the fatherhood of God. In the higher conditions of the Christian consciousness the filial feeling toward God is full and rich; the witness of the Spirit is clear and satisfying; the voice of God makes itself articulate in the soul; the heart nestles under the wing of the Almighty, and feels itself suffused with the infinite love. Consciously, the child of God is baptized with the Holy Ghost; guilty before the inexorable law, he feels himself covered by the atoning merit of Christ, and receives the witness of his acceptance with God; helpless amid the disorders and agonies of a world estranged from God, he feels himself to be under the eye of the infinite pity, and kept by the infinite power; from the unfathomable depths of unseen Godhead are breathed upon him evermore the gracious words, “Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid;” “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.”

3. The people of God are comforted in a *joyful hope*.

Hope is an immediate fruit of the Spirit. “For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.” “Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may

abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."

Surely, those who abound in hope abound also in joy, "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." They are looking for, and hasting unto, the coming of the day of God. According to his promise, they look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness; they have hope toward God that there shall be a resurrection of the dead; they live in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began. Being justified by his grace, they are made heirs according to the hope of eternal life; Christ is in them the hope of glory, and they rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

A principal office of hope is to impart strength—strength to labor, and also to suffer. No grand enterprise can be prosecuted without it; effort is feeble, languid, inefficient, without it. Despairing labor is heavy, painful, slow, imperfect. Work done in high hope is done joyfully; every muscle is elastic; the step is springy, and the eye radiant. So despair adds the most poignant sting to pain; but hope cheats anguish of its pang, and infuses the anticipated joy into the present sorrow. "The hope of the righteous shall be gladness." "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God." The soul exults in the hope of immortality; the light of it shines all along our pathway, penetrates the valley of the shadow of death, blazes upon the waters of the dark river,

and brings within the range of vision all the glories of the life to come. Surely, we “have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the vail; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made a high-priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.”

4. The people of God are comforted *by the immediate presence of the Holy Spirit in times of affliction and bereavement.*

“When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.” “In the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.” “For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.” The Lord is “my strength and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction.” “The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.” “God comforteth them that are cast down.” “I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you.”

Thy shining grace can cheer
This dungeon where I dwell;
'T is paradise when thou art here—
If thou depart, 't is hell.

5. God comforts his people *in death*.

“The righteous hath hope in his death.” “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” “The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” “Death is SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY.” Death is *not death* to the saints. It is only a sweet sleep in which God lays them away to rest until he shall call for them; and he himself, by his Spirit, hushes them to their repose. He is by their bedside when the hour comes, and has promised to make all their bed in their sickness. Precious in his sight is the death of his saints.

We have seen the followers of Christ die with a smile on their faces, and heard them say, “O it is sweet to die!” Some of them, like Stephen, see an open heaven and a welcoming Saviour; and many have reported a vision of angels. The city of God and its glorious inhabitants come into sight. The soul, baptized already with the Spirit of God, is fully prepared for the high companionships into which it is just entering. Its vision is already adjusted to celestial light. Verily, this is not dying; it is coming into life. He whose life is hid with Christ in God, who lives in the Spirit and walks in the Spirit, only passes from a lower to a higher region of life; from a plane of being which lies in the shadow of death, he ascends to another on which falls the full luster of the uncreated light.

In conclusion, let us rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. GOD IS IN THE CHURCH. He is with his people, not at second-hand, dealing not through a third party, but he is with them in actual presence. THE HOLY GHOST ABIDES WITH THE SAINTS. The New Jerusalem has descended from God out of heaven, and the tabernacle of God is with men. From him a holy radiance shines in the Church, and through it irradiates the earth. The Comforter represents Christ in the world, and effectuates the purpose of the Incarnation among men. The fact of his presence is second in grandeur and importance only to the coming of the Son of God as a sacrificial offering for sin.

This Holy Presence is the glory of the Church. Not in the splendors of a costly architecture, nor of an artistic, elaborate, dramatic ritual; not in its painting, nor sculpture, nor poetry, nor music; not in any creation of art, which has its expression in *the material*, is witnessed the true grandeur of the Church of God. The Unseen PRESENCE is its glory. The burning bush, the scenic grandeurs of Sinai, the pillar of fire, and all such outbursts of the glory of God in nature, in the prophetic and symbolic ages, were but faint intimations of the glory of the Spirit which was to abide in the Church forever. The essential glory is above all conditions of physical expression. It is in the person and character of God; it is in the region of pure spirit; it is the radiance of truth, the effulgence of righteousness, the beauties of holiness. *Holiness* is the glory of heaven. HOLINESS—it is the *glory of God*. Through

the Holy Spirit, it is the glory of the Church. The holy lives of the people of God, and the holy truth which has been committed to them, to keep and disseminate, constitute the expression of the divine amongst men.

Alas! for the imperfections, the backslidings, the hypocrisies, that appear in the Church! These are the spots in the sun. They shadow the light. Alas! that the medium through which the Spirit shines should be so imperfect! What a focus of divine splendors the Church would be, if all who name the name of Christ would be careful to depart from iniquity!

But even as it is, through this poor medium of humanity, the indwelling glory of the Church shines with a wonderful brilliancy. Millions of men and women on earth, opening themselves to the Spirit without guile, have received his light until they are radiant in its pure beams. Through them it shines until even the blindest become conscious of it. It shines in the house of God; we have seen it there: not the "dim, religious light" of an artistic worship, but the radiance of the Spirit—"the beauties of holiness." It might have been in the gorgeous temples of a great city; it might have been in the log-cabin of the frontier; or it might have been in the primeval forest, at some modern feast of tabernacles; but we have seen it—here or there, it matters not. Then we saw, we *felt*, that architecture, fresco, fretted window, had their beauty not in themselves, but in a supernal light that rested there. In that light the naked rafter, the rough-

hewn log, the puncheon floor of the frontier chapel, are transformed into an aspect of surpassing beauty. It is the same light that made the coarse garment of our Lord white so as no fuller on earth could whiten it—radiant-white, like snow, new fallen, under the solar blaze.

We have seen that light. It was the Spirit of God spreading a hallowed tint even upon material objects, touching them into a beauty that belongs not to the things that perish. We have seen it in the forest, when the assemblies of the saints have gathered in those “first temples.” We have almost heard the rustle of angels’ wings in the foliage, which seemed tremulously conscious of God, while every twig and every leaf was tipped and fringed with celestial radiance. The noontide light lies upon field and forest richly yellow, like ethereal gold; the dewy morning glows with the smile of God; bars of level light, streaming in between the trunks and branches of the forest as the sun sinks to his setting, seem interwoven with celestial beams. The sordid soul, in its scuffle for pelf, sees no such light. It is a hallowed radiance; it is the incoming of God into consciousness; it is the exaltation of man to a higher plane—the emergence of the soul from the flesh into kindred spirit glories; it is the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven; it is the dawn of the soul’s eternal day. None can see that light but those whose eyes have been touched and opened by the power of God. The Ephphatha of the Spirit must be pronounced; the Creator himself must say, “Let there be light.”

The supreme fact—the condition of all spiritual communion—is purity of heart. Where this is, is the Holy Presence.

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” Thus walking, we shall live in him; thus dying, shall we enter into eternal life. The day is at hand; its dawn is already upon us, in faith; our eyes are becoming accustomed to the light, that we may be prepared for the splendors of the city which has “no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.”

What is Man?

SERMON IV *

"When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers; the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" Ps. viii. 3, 4.

THE flexibility of language is an interesting study. The slightest variation in the form of a word may give the gravest departure in the line

* This Sermon, in substance, has been delivered a good many times. In 1874 the text was the theme of a Commencement Sermon at Emory College, Oxford, Georgia. A part of the matter was used in an address before the literary societies of Washington College, Lexington, Virginia, at the Commencement of 1870. Inasmuch as this part has already been in print I incorporate it here, *verbatim*. This will account for the form and phraseology, in so far as they differ from the customary composition of a sermon. The reader will readily perceive that that part was not prepared for the pulpit. I do not know, however, that it is any the worse for that. The line of thought is the same, or nearly the same, as that which was pursued in the pulpit. I may add, without impropriety, that the truth and value of the *matter* of it impress me more and more with advancing years.

of meaning. In the text, every thing depends on the mood of the verb. The skeptic says, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers; the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou *shouldst be* mindful of him?"—making an argument against the fact of any special attention to man on the part of the Creator, on account of his insignificance as in contrast with the great universe in which he lives.

The devout believer, on the other hand, never once questioning the fact, yet overwhelmed with a sense of his own littleness in the presence of such vast displays of the power of God, exclaims, with the mingled emotions of joyful faith and adoring wonder, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers; the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou *art* mindful of him?" That God *does* visit man he well knows; but what an amazing thing it is that he condescends to interest himself in our affairs! What am *I*? what can I be to Him who made all worlds? When a man begins to form some idea of the great masses of matter which constitute those worlds which float around him, on all sides, and the inconceivable measures of the space through which they are scattered, no wonder that he should have a painful and humiliating sense of his own diminutive stature.

The world that he inhabits, he discovers, is one of the smallest; even among the planets it is one of the least, if you except the asteroids, which, certainly, ought not to enter into the estimate at all, being mere fragments—chips and hewings, swept

from the shop when the planetary structure was finished; and of the planets the most massive is but as a child's toy compared with those great governing masses that are at the head of families of worlds about them. Take all that has been brought within the range of vision by the most powerful lenses, and put the earth into comparison with it, what does it amount to? It is, in relation to the whole, no greater than the lightest particle of the dust that rises from your carriage-wheel upon the highway is in relation to the bulk of the earth. We may well imagine that an angel sent out with a microscope to search for the earth would be millions of ages finding it. And on this globular speck what is man? He is incomparably less, as respects the earth, than the smallest animalcule is to the pool in which it is bred. May we not, then, suppose that a man would be no more to the great God than one of the *infusoria* is to the man who may chance to own the pool which it inhabits?

But the contrast drawn in the text is not between the individual man and the rest of the universe, but between man and the *Maker* and Proprietor of the universe. "When I consider *thy* heavens, the work of *thy* fingers; the moon and the stars, which *thou* hast ordained; what is man?" When you put the weight of a man in the scales against all worlds, he is lost; he cannot be felt. How much more when the contrast is between him and the God who made all the worlds! It is the Power of whom all the worlds are but a partial and imperfect exponent that we are put into contrast with, in this passage.

Our puny thought labors for some symbol that may represent the disparity; but we must give it up in despair, conscious only that in that presence we are nothing.

The contrast is heightened by the terms in which the work of the Creator is described in the text. With what ease he is represented as turning off his work! The heavens are the work of his *fingers*. All those enormous masses of matter he projected into being without an effort! They are the work of his fingers. He never poised himself upon his loins. The resources of his strength were never touched. The easy, almost unconscious, manipulation of his fingers shaped them all and tossed them into their places. Put the best product of your own power into the comparison. You raise a stone of two hundred pounds weight to an elevation of five feet, and you have done a great thing. How you strained every muscle in the herculean achievement! When you undertake to raise a mass of half a ton's weight to the height of fifty feet you have to call a half dozen others to your aid, and, with ample apparatus, with elaborate contrivance of derrick, of block and tackle, of ropes and pulleys, with slow and painful labor, you bring it to its place at last—taking prudent care the while lest, something giving way, you should be crushed by your own machinery.

But God handles worlds, and never feels their weight. It scarcely seems as if it had cost him the labor of any thought. He fashions them with his fingers, as if it were the recreative employment of

his leisure, rather than a serious labor. Well may we shrink into the deepest sense of insignificance before him, and with self-depreciating awe adore the condescension with which he takes any notice of us.

But in this estimate of ourselves we are liable to commit a great blunder. Many, I doubt not, do so. They take into their account of man only his physical dimensions, and undertake to ascertain his value solely upon that basis. In doing this they leave out the principal factor—in fact, the *only* one that is of any real account.

It must never be forgotten that values are not found in masses and magnitudes. If this were so, a man's worth would be as his weight. To ascertain his exact value as a man, you would have only to put him in the scales. You might find an idiot weighing four hundred pounds, and a statesman one hundred and twenty-five. The result goes heavily against the statesman; yet more heavily will he be discounted if you put him against a fat Durham ox. Depend upon it, values are not in masses, but in something quite diverse from that.

If I knew of a house-fly that could comprehend the parallax, and compute sidereal distances, or calculate an eclipse, I should hold him in distinguished regard. I should feel proud to harbor a family of fleas upon my person if I but knew they had mastered Euclid, were examining the rays of Sirius by spectrum analysis, or observing the transit of Venus with intelligent interest. Whoever or whatever he may be that is capable of intelligent consciousness of nature is of greater value than all unconscious

nature, whatever its extent; and if, going beyond this, he shall get glimpses of the Author of nature, all comparison of him and it ceases. He is upon an elevation that is above all comparative estimate with what is below him. Between that point and any thing below it the distance is simply immeasurable.

On this elevation we find man. His very capacity to make some contrast of himself with God, having interpreted him by his works, and to realize the infinitesimal diminutiveness of the greatest finite in comparison of the Infinite, gives him an importance and dignity in the presence of which my poor speech becomes discouraged with itself. You may be sure the inspired psalmist understood this matter too well to put himself in contrast with the moon and stars, so as to feel humiliated by the disparity of bulk. In that comparison he would be filled with a sense of his own elevation—for, comprehending nature, however imperfectly, he must be greater than nature; but before the Being who has all the wisdom, the knowledge, and the power that come into expression in nature he bows and worships, with most profound humility and self-depreciation.

Yet comparative nothingness before God is compatible with the highest conception of finite dignity and grandeur, of both person and destiny. A man may think of himself as a being of high significance in his actual subjective importance, while yet he has deepest sense of the disparity there is between him and the Being whose fingers fashioned the stars.

Man is great. Taken in himself, and in his rela-

tion to nature, it is impossible to overestimate him. In any just consideration of the factors to be taken into the account, any one man must be of priceless worth. The text was not intended to depreciate man. It is only a devout recognition of the Infinite Source of being. It is the language of worship, and expresses the humility of the worshiper in that Supreme Presence before which the whole vast aggregate of finite things is inexpressibly small. But it leaves to man any advantage that facts may justify in the field of finite comparisons. He may be never so great in any such view, yet the humbling interrogatory of the text remains a most just and a most beautiful recognition of the relation between him and God, and a most becoming act of worship. The terms of it put man in contrast with God, and with nothing else.

But I propose to consider the question, What is man? in another light. What is he, in fact? I will not ask how he may properly view himself in the presence of his Creator, but *what* he is considered in himself—what he is to himself, and therefore to his Maker; for little as he may be in contrast with God, yet in God's estimate of him his value is found in his own nature. What a man is in himself and to himself will give all the factors of a just estimate; and in the light of such an estimate does his Maker regard him, for he sees things as they are in themselves.

What, then, is man? I proceed to lay down one general proposition, which will constitute the theme of this discourse. It is this:

MAN IS SUCH A BEING AS THAT, *a priori*, WE MIGHT WELL EXPECT GOD TO BE MINDFUL OF HIM, AND TO VISIT HIM.

This proposition I propose to maintain and illustrate.

If any should object, at the outset, that such a view of our own importance must foster pride, as possibly may be the case, perhaps I ought to pause long enough to say, That cannot be so. The more adequately a man conceives of his own actual greatness, the more will he see and feel the greatness of God; as he has profounder sense of his own being, God becomes more and more to him. A serious view of his own powers will involve a serious view of his responsibilities, and of the sovereign authority under which he holds his existence; and these are the considerations that inspire humility. Whatever may be the greatness of the finite, still there is infinite disparity between it and the Infinite. The greater the sense of power in the creature, the deeper will be the sense of its littleness before the Creator. God is not much to a man whose being is lightly estimated by himself. The man that struts and stiffens with self-consciousness is the man to whom the significance of his own existence is unperceived; he does not see himself in that serious light which suggests humility; in fact, the flippant man is incapable of any profound self-abasement. Sin is nothing to him; God is little or nothing to him; the words *worthiness* and *unworthiness* scarcely mean any thing to his ear. But let a man once realize what his own being is and means, and then God, and sin, and

holiness, and responsibility, and destiny, become words of such import to him as overwhelms him with a humbling sense of himself in the presence of the Almighty and All-holy. That man is capable of a great humility.

Let us, then, not hesitate to consider the proposition in the light of rational inquiry. Truth can do no evil. The more fully we know ourselves, the better will we be prepared to know God, to realize our obligation to him, and to respond to his claims upon us.

Let us proceed, then, to inquire, What is our life? and to make up a just estimate of our existence, in view of the facts elicited.

At the outset I suggest a preliminary inquiry, the pertinency of which will become apparent as we proceed: What end did the Creator propose to himself in the work of creation? Imagine yourself a spectator of the august scene when God was framing the worlds; endeavor to realize the reaches of space taken possession of, and the stupendous forces brought into play; dwell upon the endless variety and minute detail of plan. What was the purpose? for there must have been an *end* in view. You cannot think of an intelligent worker engaged in his work without supposing an end toward which the work proceeds—an object that is, in his estimation, worthy of him, and adequate to the time and labor bestowed. It is a fundamental condition of thought that you should suppose this. You cannot think of God engaged in this work without supposing that he intends to accomplish a purpose, to

reach an object, which will be worthy fruit of his labor.

We will suppose that the work has progressed to the completion of the physical universe. The sun blazes in the firmament; the moon swings through the half-illuminated abysses of night; the stars fleck the sky, hinting the mysteries and the immensities of God's domain. The earth is finished, in contour and in detail: the mountains stand in their places; rivers sweep along their channels; oceans fill their basins; forests wave their foliage in the light; plains lie spread out in their beauty; grasses carpet the earth; meteorological phenomena appear, and the processes of nature are all active. Now, suppose the work to *stop* at this point, and then ask yourself, What has been done? what *object* has been accomplished? Is there an end in which you can imagine the Creator to have satisfaction? I do not hesitate to answer, No! *Nothing* has been accomplished—nothing that you can accept as a worthy issue of the work done. Think of it! What has been achieved, upon the supposition that the work stops upon the plane of mere material existence?

Can you suppose that God required it to project into objective relations to himself, this expression of his own wisdom and power, that he might become well aware of them? The thought would be almost a blasphemy. Did he require the universe to be a great plaything for himself, to amuse the solitude of his existence? Preposterous! You cannot think of such a thing.

An expression of his wisdom and power it is;

but there is no witness of it except himself, and he needs it not. The resources of his own being suffice for his own blessedness. In the creation of mere dead masses of matter, and the establishment of the order of nature, I repeat it, *nothing has been done*—absolutely nothing.

But now *man* appears upon the scene. He looks abroad, sees the magnificent display, and *enjoys* it; he looks up through nature, and begins to be conscious of *God*. Here the Creator's work stands face to face with him; he enters into conscious communication with him, hears his voice, receives his word, and gives him back responses of love and worship. The work of creation has a witness, now, who can be recipient of its divinest meaning; here in man nature reaches consciousness, and comes to know its Author. This is the result—the crowning fact of all the work.

We can account for the universe now, and understand it. It *was* worth while to do all this work; it *was* worth while to make the worlds, since they were to be the abode of man.

Now I know why the dome of the heavens stands above, and why the stars hang like jets of glory all over it: it was to roof in intelligent life. Now I know why mountain-chains ridge the earth, and rivers seam it—why seasons come and go, why rains descend, and harvests grow. God was preparing for the finishing-touch, the last effort of his hand—for a product of creative power that should be in his own image. For the coming occupant he must make provision. Now I know why the grass and

the forest-leaves were in beautiful green; they were to refresh his eye for whom they were created. No wonder the skies were of beautiful blue; no wonder the tints of the morning were penciled with such exquisite shading; no wonder the cloud-drapery of the evening was dyed in a thousand hues, flaming and mellow, in touches that might intoxicate an angel with beauty! for God was ornamenting a home for his child, man.

Intelligent life is the exponent of God's work. We accept man's presence in nature as a sufficient exponent of nature; we are satisfied with this result. He who is consciously recipient of the Creator's beneficence might well have a universe created to be his residence. Nature is explained the moment it is seen to be the basis of *intelligent life*.

Now we are prepared to take more accurate account of this highest product of divine skill—human life—and estimate its value in its own light. In the light of this crowning fact of his work, when it stood forth in the freshness of its first beauty, as the exponent of all he had done, God said "it was good"—"it was very good." What is this—this *human life*—that he looks upon as the *finish* of his work, and is complacent?

We will look into the significance of his being, as it appears in a rational view of its own *data*, and pursue the investigation in the light of our own proposition—that man is such a being as we might well expect his Maker to be mindful of, and to visit.

Life, on one side, indeed, presents a trivial aspect. If you contemplate a man with greater or less pains

collecting his food, and then consuming it with the eager appetite of the boor or the gratified gusto of the *gourmand*, or making his toilet in good or bad taste; if you contemplate him as he makes money, and hoards or spends it; as he goes to his business in the morning, smoking a cigar, to chaffer and wrangle about prices and per cents; or as he returns at night successful and satisfied, or, it may be, chagrined, defeated, gloomy; or as he puts in a parenthesis of relaxation or of pleasure-taking upon the prosy page filled up with care and labor; if you contemplate him, in early life, in the midst of a widening circle of domestic and social relations, happy or vexatious; or in declining years, as the circle gradually disintegrates, until he himself, at last, in pitiable senility, sinks down into the dust—and understand that this is *life*—then life, to you at least, is a beggarly business; an officious, pretentious exhibition of small wares; a poor play, for the most part clumsily rendered, ending flat, and properly entitled, “Much Ado about Nothing.” If this is life, and life is this, one might well be pardoned if he should deplore his birth and revile the fates that introduced so high a consciousness to a destiny so mean.

A civilized condition does not relieve the littlenesses of existence, if life is nothing more than this. The elegant attitude and flexure of good manners, the improved quality of coat and condiments, a cultivated mind, and an extended range of pleasures, form a background that brings into more full relief the puerile figures of the picture. They are costly

drapery of coarse furniture—a gilt edge upon straw paper; they increase the parade without enhancing the result; they make more sound, but give no better sense; there is greater “ado,” but still all about “nothing.”

Are railroads built, and “great ships,” just that a more extended and more active commerce may bring greater variety of good food? Are wars provoked and carried on, amid terrors, desolations, and deaths—carried on, sometimes, until they breed famine and pestilence, and depopulate States—just to assert and defend the “*rights*” of an intelligent animal in the matter of pasture and provender? Is civil society organized, and are governments established and kept up, by legislation and diplomacy, with great show of judicial and executive dignities and dignitaries, having power to imprison and to hang, with all the incidents of tariff and taxation, and all questions of domestic economy and finance, just to aid the citizen in securing his “*supplies*,” and protect him against the lazy and the thievish, so that he may eat his dinner, with his household, in quiet satisfaction, and sleep at night with some assurance that he will have a coat to wear the next day? Does the telegraph bring two hemispheres together, in your morning paper, only that you may have a broad view of the stage upon which this puppet-show of digging, and bargaining, and scrambling, and eating, and dressing, and dying, is being performed?

If this be so, then the man culminates in his stomach, and the most perfect life is realized in the

keenest appetite and the best digestion; then the solution of our existence is found in the answer to three petty questions: "What shall I eat? what shall I drink? wherewithal shall I be clothed?" Then the great endowment of reason is valuable only to discover the most efficient means of producing corn and cotton, and to invent the best methods of grinding the one and fabricating the other. The *soul* is a mere incident, intellect a more elaborate, but less direct and often less efficient, capacity of finding acorns than instinct, and the body—the great receiver and consumer—is the *man*, the point in which life culminates and destiny is realized. To feed well, to be well housed and well conditioned, for the space of thirty years upon an average, and to die with as little pain as may be, is the chief good. Is it this, indeed, in which all the hopes and fears, the aims and agonies, of life culminate? Is this what the word *man* means? Is man a mere money-making and food-consuming machine?

The question is answered in your minds already. On every face, in every eye, I see it written, No! These physical conditions are but the base of the grand structure which we name MAN. Bread is valuable, indeed; rather, I should say invaluable, for it is the foundation of a grand edifice—Life; at least, as life now appears, in its present phenomenal conditions, it rests on bread. Life does not culminate in bread-eating—that reverses the order; bread-eating culminates in life.

Eating, and drinking, and delving, and trading, as processes that end in a higher result, acquire

value and dignity from the end they serve. The coarse substructure is a most worthy thing, since it bears up the sacred temple. In its relation to that it has a certain beauty, but taken by itself it is both worthless and unsightly; and that were surely a most ludicrous perversion which should assert that the temple existed for the sake of the rough stones it rested on. Life is not made for care and toil, for eating and drinking, but is itself the high result developed out of these conditions. They have no value save in their relations to it.

In *life itself*—in *consciousness*—is the measure of humanity to be taken, and not in its incidents and accessories. Not in the fact of feeding, but of being, are we interested. *Consciousness* is the true exponent of all values. What a man is, consciously, will supply the *data* by which every estimate of him must be made.

I invite you, therefore, to the task of introspection—to an analysis of consciousness—that you may take just views of the signification of your own existence, and direct your aims accordingly.

My great quarrel with men, especially young men, is that they underestimate themselves. They measure themselves by a false standard, and get a contemptible result; they judge their existence by its accessories, and not by itself; they contemplate consciousness through the muddy medium of sensuality. They take the dimensions of a man, and put him in the scales: he is six feet by one and a half, and weighs a hundred and seventy-five pounds; he tells capital anecdotes, is a first-rate business

man, keeps a fast horse, and his palate discriminates most nicely the flavor of good wines—as if spherical trigonometry and avoirdupois could express man, or life culminated in notes and accounts, in a good joke and a bottle of sherry or champagne.

Let us, then, find the contents of consciousness, ascertain their significance, and determine their value.

First, let me say, All value begins in the fact of *consciousness* itself. Below that point there is nothing on which to base an estimate. It is just as well not to *be* as not to be *conscious*. Below the line of consciousness things have no value to themselves. To living, conscious being they may render some service, and so, in their relation to it, have a certain value. All that they are worth comes of their relation to some of those high natures which they serve. Take a tree, for instance, standing on the summit of a hill: there is no more beautiful object than a symmetrical, well-developed tree, with perpendicular shaft piercing the atmosphere, its lateral branches on all sides covered with foliage, swaying in the wind and bathed in sunlight. O it is at once magnificent and beautiful! Yet to itself the tree is *nothing*; *to it* there is no warmth in the warm ray, no luster in the light, no rhythm in the rustle of its own leaves; it is a matter of no consequence to it whether it shall live a thousand years or die to-morrow; it has no concern upon the subject; whether it shall toss its branches in ten thousand coming storms or yield them to the furnace to-day, is all one to it; when the ax is lifted against

its side it looks around with no regret upon the forest of which it is taking its last leave. The young lady at her piano may sing, with great pathos, "Woodman, spare that tree;" but the sentiment is all in herself. The crash of its fall is an affecting farewell to you who have loved it long, but to itself it is nothing. "To be or not to be" is *not* the question with it; it has no questions. But in its branches there sits a little sparrow, twittering its evening melody with satisfaction: in its minute way the tiny thing enjoys itself. Here we are upon the plane of consciousness, and here existence begins to have a certain value to itself. Sparrow-life is something to itself. And just here God begins to take paternal interest in his own works: his eye pursues with parental solicitude the flight and fall of the little sparrow; not one of them falleth to the ground without his notice. This life is worth something even to God.

But sparrow-life is as nothing to human life. "Ye are of more value than many sparrows." Human consciousness, for range and depth, finds nothing comparable to itself in all the world below it. Let us see what it is.

Take it at an early stage. Take the little child, two or three years old, sunning itself in its mother's smile, or thrilled in her embrace. How his soul melts under the magic of her voice! What a sense of being and of blessedness there is! It is the prophecy of coming wonders. The mysterious light of life, kindled within, irradiates his face; eye, and limb, and voice, give vent to the overflowing vital-

ity. What a gush of feeling! And then, again, what a sense of wonder! Life is a perpetual romance: beauty pours itself in upon him through the eye, and paints itself upon his thought; music comes to him on the invisible waves of the air, and diffuses itself, like a spiritual presence, through all his soul; darkness comes, and silence, and the hush and the obscurity awe him; tempests rage, and the fierce flame of the lightning, the thunder-crash, and the roar and rush of resistless winds, frighten him; strifes and vexations, hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, loves and hatreds, begin already to make uproar in him. O child-life is a wondrous thing!

But the wonder deepens. Let a few more years do their work in him. Send his mind off among the stars and beyond them—out into the open, unlimited space. Let him read the first chapter of Genesis; let him contemplate, however dimly, the throes of creative energy and the birth of worlds; let him look on when light flames out of the eternal darkness and discloses the vision of the universe. Set him face to face with death, and tell him of “the everlasting life after death.” Let him get mysterious, inadequate intimations of Godhead. Give him to understand that the activities of life do not terminate in single acts, but that they go on to eternal destinies. Open to him the great doctrine of responsibility—the sovereignty of God, the authority of the Law, and the final account which all men shall give to the Creator. Let him form some conception of the result of character in destiny.

Now, what questions he will ask—questions of all mysterious things! He will solicit the earth for her secrets—her hills and forests, her mountains and rivers, her caves and oceans, and all her voices and silences; he will interrogate the distances and the inaccessible stars; he will explore the depths of his own thought, and ask whence and why he is. At length, passing from the created to the uncreated, he will strive to ascertain the essence and the origin of things.

This very power to ask questions stamps him with high value. It indicates a form of consciousness in vital contact with outer being and with vital interest in all things. What breadth and sweep of *personal being* are given in the power to *ask questions*!

Let us, then, consider the elements of consciousness, and reduce them to an analysis which, though extremely imperfect, may yet aid us in forming some just notion of the import of our existence.

We will begin with the faculty of *understanding*—*the power to know*. There is not only perception of things, but also account taken of them. The mind has knowledge of them—it grasps and contains the ideas of things. Thus, as we may say, material objects *exist over again in the human mind*. They are reproduced in the understanding.

Take an illustration already used: The tree, so full of beauty in itself, and yet *to itself* nothing, takes form again in the understanding; it has, as you may say, another existence there. Earth, air, and sky—rocks, hills, fields, floods, and forests;

rivers and oceans; light, darkness, fire, tempests; all things—become, by means of the understanding, subjective in human consciousness. To the full extent to which a man's knowledge of the facts of creation reaches, they are reproduced in him. If it should ever be that one mind could grasp the whole universe, *the cosmos* would be duplicated in that mind!

Nor is it material objects alone that take form and being in the mind, but all facts. Relations, laws, movements, forces, processes, voices, attitudes, uses, qualities, principles, are all grasped by the mind—all go into its consciousness, and become, thus, part and parcel of itself. They become the contents of the mind. The inanimate works of God become significant and acquire a value, now, which in themselves they could not have.

But the understanding does much more than merely to grasp the works of God: it recognizes even the fact of the divine existence; it sweeps up through the created to the uncreated. Man contemplates God.

On what an altitude of being must he stand who can entertain the thought of *God*—who can contemplate the CREATOR! The capacity to think on so high a plane as that which touches upon the Infinite is glorious indeed. This is the last result of creative power. God's work opens its eyes upon himself, and stands face to face with him. The creature meets the Creator, and becomes conscious of him. This product of his energy is capable of receiving manifestations of himself, and of respond-

ing to them. The workmanship of his hands holds intelligent intercourse with him. Here the creation blossoms, and bears fruit that may feast even God. He looked upon it with satisfaction, and said, "It is good."

So much for the understanding. Consider next the faculty of *reasoning*—the power to classify facts, to consider them in the light of *data*—the power to proceed from cause to consequence, from premise to conclusion: the faculty of mathematical and philosophical research.

The mind is not just a store-house—a mere depository of facts; it has also the faculty of using the facts held by the understanding for high purposes of speculation and action; it constructs systems of science, of mechanics, of art, of government, of philosophy, of morals. Thus from facts, which are the raw material of thought, it brings out all the stupendous results of mental force, the finished and polished products of intellectual skill. God's creation is the field which man's reason cultivates, and from the furrow of his thought there springs an efflorescence more beautiful than Sharon, and more fragrant than Oriental gardens, and fruit more luscious than the grapes of Eshcol.

Reason manifests itself in three forms—logic, philosophy, and art, which includes poetry. Logic is the pure reason, and includes mathematics; its simplest expression is in mathematical demonstrations. Philosophy and art are an outgrowth of the pure reason, and cover a wide range: on one side they give speculation, metaphysics, psychology, and

imagination, which itself is a manifestation of reason and the source of all art; on the other side, the practical, they give all organization—governments, corporations, commerce, organized industries. From the works of God, which become subjective in the understanding, what new creations are evolved! What new earths and new heavens float and glow in the firmament of thought! The creation not only exists over again in man, but becomes reproductive: each fact is germinant, and worlds on worlds in the abysses of thought are the harvest.

Doctrines, systems, philosophies, dramas, epics, lyrics—now sweeping outward with cosmical breadth and grandeur, now searching inward with incisive pungency, now dogmatizing with magisterial thunder-voice, now booming forward on the railway of induction, irresistible—*ergo, ergo*, now putting forth solicitous *antennæ* of experiment, and now weaving rainbows with facile interplay of thought and sentiment, or peopling the universe with all possible forms of beauty, and grandeur, and terror—these are the offspring of reason.

Governments, societies, industries, as we have seen, all come of this faculty. All organized activities and historical movements, all forces of society and the resulting conditions, come of it. Science, sculpture, painting, architecture, poetry, are products of it.

Closely allied to reason is the “faith faculty.” Faith is the cognition of the unseen, of the spiritual; it is the understanding in its highest function

—the understanding as it is related to the highest forms of being, the spiritual and divine.

The very fact that there is such a faculty in man is high proof of the reality of unseen things. Otherwise, there is somewhat *subjective* in man which has no *objective fact* answering to it. Indeed, the chief glory and crown of his consciousness is that it touches God, that it recognizes and realizes the Infinite.

Every man feels that that which is deepest and richest in himself and in the possibilities of his being is above all terms of mere scientific expression; it cannot be postulated in any mathematical formula: no diagram upon the blackboard can represent it. The spiritual essence exists under more subtle conditions; its relations to God and eternity belong to a higher class of facts.

In attempting this elevation reason bewilders itself amid an overwhelming array of unresolved *nebulae*; it discovers supernal light and an unapproachable glory; all is remote, inaccessible, undefined. How eagerly it turns the object-glass of revelation upon these heavens! and with what joy it sees each luminous cloud resolved into stars! There they stand high in the holy places—everlasting utterances of God.

With regard to spiritual and divine things, faith is the ultimate word of reason. The highest reason ends in faith; in a region where it can find no *data* of scientific induction, it hears the voice of God, recognizes it, trusts it, follows it. God's will and purposes on one side, and man's obligation and des-

tiny on the other, come into a clear light. Faith puts us into immediate communication with God and with the highest range of facts in the universe; life and immortality are brought to light; man discovers himself in the brotherhood of the immortals; he finds himself on a footing with the principedoms and powers of a higher life.

In the great fact of the *Atonement* faith gazes into the depths of the divine nature, and witnesses the utmost glory of God.

The most general analysis of the elements of consciousness must include the *conscience*, through which we are related to the divine government and the law of right. Conscience is the recognition and sense of *obligation*; it is the correlative, in consciousness, of *ought* and *ought not* in conduct. In a being governed by mechanical force it would have no office.

But, with respect to moral actions, man is free; he is self-moved, self-directed; he adjusts himself, without constraint, to the law of right, and breaks it or keeps it as he wills, accounting at last to the Supreme Judge. In this fact the dignity of man's nature is impressively apparent; for an inseparable incident of the elevation is the hazard of miscarriage. Freedom, misadjusting the helm, may land the rich cargo of consciousness at the port of perdition. We are at the point of departure, upward or downward, to destinies of our own making.

But we have not yet fully explored the field of consciousness. The affections, passions, sentiments, and emotions, give an important factor in any just

estimate of human life; in them are found unutterable possibilities of misery and of joy, of pleasure and of pain. The importance of life to itself consists largely in these facts; they enrich it beyond computation; they afford, also, the possible condition of its deepest impoverishment; they give, in a perverted nature, the sense of loss and degradation; they contain the susceptibility of shame and remorse.

Thus man not only knows and thinks, but also *feels*. The range of feeling is commensurate with that of thought. There are in man sensitive responses to the appeals of all external objects; he is most exquisitely receptive of manifestations of beauty, grandeur, sublimity. What pleasure, what elevation, what awe, he realizes in their presence! how infinitely varied are his emotions, in character, tone, and degree! From the merest sense of complacency to the most consuming love, from the lightest shadow of repugnance to the hot fury of insatiable revenge, from the quietest sense of pleasure to the most tumultuous passion of joy, the changes, and degrees, and shadings, are infinite. The soul is "a harp of a thousand strings," giving forth, at times, the hum of a half audible melody, and then the exultant swell, and rush, and rapture, of celestial music; and then again from the vexed chords will come the clang and clash of discord diabolical.

We have seen that external objects coming into the mind have a sort of second existence there—that they are reproduced in the understanding. Material objects, as they exist in themselves, are

unconscious, and of no value. The beautiful tree—its foliage gemmed with rain-drops under the sunburst that succeeds the storm—is a mere dead thing, and, standing by itself, must go for nothing; but when it takes a second being in the mind of some man, it is no longer a dead thing, but becomes a living thought. The mountain, in its massive grandeur, with all its crags, and gorges, and precipices, its glaciers and cascades—dead, and dark, and silent to itself—comes into our thought, and has there the breath of life breathed into it; then all its magnificence becomes *vital*—it lives. The pebble on the beach, struck by a wanton hoof, bounds into the sunlight, and, unaware of its own beauty, careless of its own destiny, catches the eye of some strolling boy, goes through it into his soul, and is there “a thing of beauty and a joy forever.”

Thus all that comes into the mind is raised at once to the plane of consciousness, and becomes vital; all dead things come to life there; they form the texture of thought; they become thought; they are no longer insensate; they breathe; they flash with intelligence; they are alive; they know themselves; they revel in their own light, and are consciously tremulous in their own rhythm.

External objects, as they reappear in thought, acquire sensibility as well. All beautiful things in the mind are vital with esthetic feeling. When the Hebrew poet demands of the forests and of the waves of the sea that they shall rejoice, that they shall clap their hands and praise God, if you take the waves and forests as they are in themselves only,

we must receive it as mere Oriental extravaganza; but when you take forests and ocean-waves as they exist in your own thought, they do indeed worship. The exultant swell of their shout is worthy music for the ear of God; in your understanding they are all conscious of the Creator, and give back intelligent responses of felt praise to him.

In fact, you will find, upon reflection, that all consciousness, or nearly all, is conditioned upon the presence of the objective in the understanding. Almost all thought and sensibility are thus conditioned. A man who should be, from his birth, shut off from all communication with the objective would realize himself but vaguely; there could be little or no thought; the esthetic feeling would be wholly dormant, for the occasion of its evolution would be absent. So of all emotion: the field of consciousness would be reduced to the narrowest limit; there could be nothing more than the mere sense of being, and that itself would be extremely vague. It is the *subjectivity of the objective*, then, as it comes into thought, that constitutes the staple of consciousness.

So man realizes himself through that which is not himself. It follows that the area of consciousness is greater or less as the *external is taken in*. The intenseness of it may depend on other conditions, but its breadth is always, and of necessity, given in the extent of knowledge.

I ask you now, from these *data*, to make an estimate of man—to interpret the word *man* in the light of these facts. He is the supreme fact, from

which all nature takes its significance. Coming into him, all inanimate objects become conscious, take fire with intelligence, and are fused into sensibility; all facts and truths throb and glow within him.

Then, upon all these as *data*, reason falls to work with its methods, tearing down and building up, until a new creation—the world of science, of art, of poetry, of society, of organized labor and enterprise—rises from the plastic hand of man.

Consciousness, in one analysis of it, may be given in two terms: it consists of *susceptibilities* and *powers*. Both are involved in what has been already stated, especially the former. The susceptibilities are capacity of *receiving*; the powers, capacity of *doing*. When objects come into the mind, it is not only receptive of them, but reacts upon them. Coming into it, the mind vitalizes them, as it is enlarged by them. Thus greatened by them, its own life is augmented, and this life is self-active; it moves by a momentum arising in itself; it is endowed with a causative energy; it is an originating force, which acts upon nature, and yet more largely upon spirit. Man is constituted not only to receive and enjoy, but also to act, to achieve, to give out results from himself—results that shall be the equivalent, in scope and value, of all that he takes in. The soul is not only the alembic of the wondrous alchemy whereby stones come into life, but it is a power, delivering itself upon events and shaping destinies; it has purposes to carry into effect, hopes to fulfill, an ambitious thirst to satiate; it has, also, energies

adjusted to these ends; it has its own battles to fight, its own wants to satisfy, its own footing to secure, amid the powers and activities of the universe.

Nor do his activities terminate upon himself. Whether he will or not, he is so vitally related to æthers that the forces proceeding from him take effect, for weal or woe, on them; he contributes to the sum of good, or swells the tide of evil, as his own character and enterprises may be of this class or that.

In this self-adjusting energy of man is found the fact of character. As he takes attitude and relation to the law of right, is he, in himself, good or evil. All that is in consciousness, in the case of any person, may take on the taint and infection of moral evil, and constitute an odious presence and a malignant force among the works of God. The most brilliant intelligence, seen through the medium of a base moral nature, diffuses a lurid glare, like sunshine struggling through the smoke of a volcano; it touches nothing with beauty, warms nothing into life; its affections and passions are a suffocating, infectious heat, breeding only mildew and vermin.

I invite you again to pause, and from these additional *data* to make your estimate of man, not forgetting that this same capacity of *will*, on which character hinges, may be the point of departure upward as well as downward. It is no mere Utopia to which I turn your eyes. In yourself are the conditions of a moral attainment that shall be spotless as the robe of a seraph, and diffusive of life and blessedness through all the circle of your loves.

I should be derelict to the obligations imposed by such a theme if I should fail to remind you that man, with all these capacities, these susceptibilities and powers—with all this breadth, and depth, and intensity of consciousness—is immortal; this vital substance, aggregating in itself, and vitalizing and incorporating into itself, as the contents of consciousness, the multitudinous objects of knowledge, is indestructible.

The sun is but a spark of fire,
A transient meteor in the sky;
The soul, immortal as its Sire,
Can never die!

With every vital fact that has become part of its knowledge and gone into feeling, it will live forever; in its proper character, good or bad, it will live forever; in destinies celestial or infernal—destinies of its own making, destinies that are the outgrowth and issue of character—*it must live forever!*

We have the authority of the word of God for saying that in the world to come consciousness will be greatly augmented. Both susceptibilities and powers will be brought to a higher state. “Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.”

What capacity of knowledge we shall there have we cannot now imagine. “It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” What an assurance! We shall be like our Lord. I make no doubt that we shall be able

to gain more knowledge in one hour there than in a life-time here. One glance will give us a deeper insight into the *arcana* of truth than the accumulated observation of ages will reach in this world. Perception and memory will be perfect, the understanding enlarged, and store of knowledge will be laid in so rapidly, and received with such perfect grasp, that our mental acquisitions in this life will seem as nothing.

Then the resurrection body is to be "fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body." That body was so ethereal when he ascended as to respond to an inward momentum upon which it not only overcame the force of gravitation, but swept up through the highest heavens to the very throne. With such bodies we shall be "free of the universe." They will be "spiritual bodies." "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." It will be a body—not a spirit—but all grossness will be so eliminated, and the material so sublimated, as to be a sort of spiritualized matter. This body will be the vehicle of spiritual activities in that world. How responsive it will be to spiritual impulsions! Like the body of Jesus, after which it is modeled, it will doubtless be swept forward by the inward force, and, independent of atmospheres or temperatures, traverse void spaces and reach remotest worlds at will.

Shall not every saved man explore the universe? What else can satisfy the thirst for knowledge? And with the increased capacity will there not be increased thirst? Doubtless; but thirst evermore

slaking itself in luxurious access to the very fountains, with eternity before it. Will not the universe be explored at last, and the phenomena of every world appropriated by the individual understanding? Why should we doubt it?

Then all the phenomena of all the worlds will reappear in the individual understanding; then *cosmos will be duplicated in the consciousness of one man!* All material nature in all worlds, with all its laws, and processes, and events, will become the contents of consciousness.

With these accumulations of knowledge, and equivalent augmentation of personal power, what may not a man achieve in the activities of his immortal destiny? More: when the universe as it now is shall have been appropriated, who may know that there will not be new creations—enlarging fields for exploration?

I declare to you that I do solemnly believe that such are the capacities and the possibilities of destiny in human nature that if God had intended to create *but one man*, the creation of the whole universe just for him would have been justified. The presence of a single man would have been an end adequate to the outlay. How much more the existence of the countless multitudes of our race!

I speak with deliberation when I say that the recovery of only one lost man would have been a result worthy of the incarnation and sacrifice of the Son of God.

My proposition is vindicated. Man is indeed

such a being as, *a priori*, we might well expect God to be mindful of, and to visit.

With the understanding bringing the facts of inanimate nature into consciousness, reason at work upon the crude mass in the understanding, with the esthetic faculty and sensibilities raising every fact to the plane of life, with the power of volition, with moral relations and moral character formed by himself, with eternity and the scope of the universe for acquisition and achievement, must not man be an object of high interest even with Him who is the Proprietor of the universe?

Such is man; or, more properly, a running and most imperfect sketch of the more important elements of his being. From such facts alone can any true estimate of him be made.

I said, some time ago, that my chief quarrel with men was that they underrate themselves. Not that there is any lack of *pride*—you can never go amiss for that; from the scavenger to the millionaire, it pervades all classes; it struts, with well-affected magnificence, in the cabin of the field-hand, and presides, with better grace indeed, and more polished manners, over the hospitalities of the mansion. I have seen the boot-black, servile and humble as he is when he supplicates your patronage, stiffen himself among his fellows, as he made a pompous parade of his pocketful of postal-currency, with an air of triumph and a swagger that would do credit to the most consummate swell on Broadway.

No; there is no lack of pride. But, alas! the

very occasions that call it into play are in proof of the low estimate which men place upon themselves. They are proud of accidents which, with any just sense of the dignity and value of their nature, would go for nothing.

One man is proud of ancestral prestige; another is purse-proud, until every muscle acquires a sort of metallic rigidity. Any incident or accident which differences a man from his neighbor is a sufficient basis of self-consciousness. I have had in my eye at the same moment a fop and a peacock, displaying their fine plumage, as nearly as I could judge, with about equal satisfaction—and certainly the bird made the better display; besides, his feathers were his own.

When a man realizes the import of his being, in its great capacities and powers—its almost infinite receptivity, the scope of possible development; in its exquisite sensibilities and inexpressible activities; in all that is actual and all that is potential in him; his *being*, as it is driven forward and directed by the momentum of an internal force; as it takes tone and character under a divine law, and solves the problem of destiny for itself; in its relation to God and eternity—when he realizes this truly and adequately, the littlenesses of a frivolous pride will vanish. These momentous facts, duly felt, will settle him in an earnest purpose too engrossing to allow room for evanescent puerilities.

The present conditions of existence necessitate a large appropriation of time, and thought, and labor, to affairs which are in themselves trivial, and acquire

dignity and value only as they are related to life in its sustentation and development. Collecting food and clothing, building houses, carrying on affairs—if action ultimated in these things, and consummated itself in them, terminating and perishing there—would be nothing more than humiliating squirrel's work and beaver's work, carried on with infinite concern and grotesque solemnity. But they are much more and better than that: they are man's commissariat, his means of supply, in the grand campaign of the present, in which he carries on the invasion and conquest of the future and the infinite.

Indeed, these very employments, low and trivial as they must be, in themselves considered, are the drill and discipline which prepare us for that which is ultimate in pursuit and achievement. Even the stress of physical want is sometimes a requisite spur to the sluggish mental nature. If Johnson had never been hungry, we should never have seen the "Dictionary," nor the "Rambler," nor "Rasselas." If Goldsmith had been a lord, the "Deserted Village" would never have been peopled with images of poetic beauty; the good "Vicar of Wakefield" would have said no wise things for our edification, and done no foolish ones for our entertainment.

But the employments of the present, even the humblest of them, while they provide food, train also the higher faculties. Intellect is developed as the power of analysis is called into requisition. Character is formed. High sentiments of integrity and honor are cultivated by the rustic while he cul-

tivates his potatoes. The domestic virtues are vitally complicated with the commonest cares and lowliest labors. Character is tested and evolved by the many exigences and temptations of business. The temper of immortal steel is tried upon the hard conditions of existence. The affairs of life are the arena in which thrones of eternity are won or lost.

Something more than corn and cotton, then, will appear as the product of common toil. The choice of employment, agricultural, mechanical, professional, mercantile, though not matter of indifference, is yet of less moment than the spirit and aim with which our work shall be done. Taste and aptitude must govern the selection. Then, if application and industry bring nothing more than daily bread, fall back upon the boundless resources of the soul, and assure yourself that in a cultivated intellect, a pure life, and generous affections, there is a capital of higher value than the best stocks in Wall street. If you make money, use it for high ends. Above all things, never become sordid. The soul that collapses upon a dollar is in most pitiable plight. Money hoarded to gratify an avaricious propensity, or spent in mere sensual indulgence, is a curse; money used to extend the domain of knowledge and virtue is a blessing of high value. In all labor, and in all accumulation, character is formed, good or bad. All activities ultimate in character, and become permanent there; and *it is character that makes destiny*. Industry, integrity, honor, faith, charity—let these constitute the staple of character. Then, with a cultivated mind, great

store of knowledge, large accumulation of the objective in consciousness, the material vitalized in thought, and becoming part and parcel of yourself, reason wielding, molding, shaping all, and will impelling the accumulated, living, potential entity upon the track of high pursuit—the whole man, thus greatedened and thus vital, delivering himself with Titanic power upon events—will you begin to realize the purpose of your creation.

In such a view the drudgery of life is exalted out of its baseness, baffled exertions are compensated, the disappointed hopes of the patriot find noble consolation, and “victory is organized out of defeat.”

But, after all, humanity never half realizes itself until it contemplates itself in the light of God. The disclosures of the Christian revelation alone reveal the full significance of life.

I dismiss you, young gentlemen, to the future. Some of you, after the brief pleasures of vacation, will return to your classes for farther drill and discipline. Mental muscle is to be developed, hardened, and brought to more perfect skill in the evolutions, and in handling the implements, of the coming combat. The preparatory training may seem irksome, but it is requisite. Others will depart from this scene, and from this hour, immediately to the heat and hurry of the fray.

There is no more thrilling spectacle than that of a young man, conscious of power, and full of ambitious aims and generous impulses, standing at the door of life's opportunities, with one foot already

advanced upon the threshold, flushed with hope and full of confidence. Little knows he the tests of skill and strength that will so soon put him to the proof. Without prescience of impending tempests, he takes his measures. What revelations will be made to him in the next five years! Happy will be he, indeed, if, with the invincible instinct of candor and sincerity, he shall understand, as he sees successive hopes drift to their wreck, that nothing is lost while honor and faith remain!

This platform will be the point of departure for many a puissant spirit to its place in the arena and its part in the contest, to take higher or lower rank, on this side or that, in the forces of good and evil, evermore at deadly feud amongst men. May not one of you be false to his God, his country, to mankind, to truth, or to himself! Abjure all tainted laurels. Let no meretricious chaplet, won in a bad cause, proclaim your title to eminent dishonors. Count not mere success a virtue. The defeated champion of the right is yet master of a domain that will yield more princely revenues than the empire of mischief. The utmost disaster is in successful wrong-doing. The trappings of the bad triumph conceal but for a moment the eternal infamy with which all lies and shams are branded.

All actual success is realized within. The true domain is consciousness. The limit of its possible enlargement, as it takes in and vitalizes the objective, is the boundary of the universe. Greatened by knowledge, and ennobled by truth, a man may well afford to laugh at thrones.

In the mountain Moses met God; from the interview his face became luminous.

Go up! from the baseness of depraved appetency, through the cloud and thick darkness of sensuality and pride, go up! In the self-abnegation of repentance, in faith and prayer, ascend those heights where men meet God. From intercourse with him the spirits of the just become radiant with ineffable light.

The Law of Spiritual Thrift.

SERMON V.*

“For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.” Luke xix. 26.

THIS text, in substance, occurs in several places in the Gospels. In the place from which I have taken it now it stands in connection with the parable of the pounds. The meaning and force of it arise out of the parable. A brief exposition of the parable, therefore, is pertinent and necessary as a preparation for the doctrine of the text.

This parable was suggested by the circumstances of the hour in which it was delivered. Our Lord was in the house of Zaccheus, at Jericho, on his way to Jerusalem. The hospitalities of the day gave rise to instructive conversation. Passing from other topics, the Saviour “added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they

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thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear." Thus we learn that *two facts* concurred to suggest the parable: first, his being "nigh to Jerusalem;" and, secondly, his auditors—most of whom, no doubt, were his own disciples—"thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear." But what had these two particular facts to do with each other? and what was there in them to suggest this parable? We shall see.

The parable has for its basis *a king* and *a kingdom*. The king is introduced before he receives the kingdom. Now, all this answers admirably to the *thought* that was in the mind of the disciples. They were looking for the kingdom of God to appear, and Christ himself they understood to be the King.

The kingdom of God they understood to be nothing else than the Jewish nation governed by a native monarch; thus they interpreted the prophecies concerning Messiah. Christ they understood to be Messiah, who should "restore all things." It was the throne of David which had been lost to them, and which the promised Son of David should restore. The Roman invader was to be driven out by a descendant of David, and under his administration the nation would become once more what it was in the time of David and Solomon, and even greater. Jerusalem, of course, would be in their minds as the capital of the kingdom; it was the traditional capital. They therefore expected Christ to assert himself and assume the crown *in Jerusalem*. True, he had effected no secret organization of partisans, and had no apparent resources; but that

would not stagger the faith of a Jew; he was imbued with a history of miracles. Always, when God had undertaken for his people, the most stupendous results were produced from the most inadequate agencies; lightnings, tempests, mysterious sounds in the tops of trees, supernatural fears in the hearts of their enemies, destroying angels, might well be looked for when the time of deliverance should come.

That it was only the civil administration (to be set up, indeed, by divine interposition) that the disciples looked for, in the kingdom of God to be established by Christ, is apparent from many considerations. They even quarreled among themselves beforehand about the offices, and the mother of two of them went so far as to solicit in form the two chief offices for her sons.

We may well believe, then, that whenever Jesus went down from Galilee to Jerusalem, the capital, his followers were all agog about the kingdom; they were breathless for the *denouement*.

At the time of which we now speak he was on his way to Jerusalem, and was at Jericho, near the end of his journey. The disciples were with him, agitated with great expectations. What might not a day bring forth? John the Baptist had preached "the kingdom is *at hand*;" the Saviour himself had announced it *at hand*, and had sent seventy men through all the country to herald the advent of the kingdom, and to proclaim it already now *at hand*; and here is the King, with his immediate adherents, on his way to Jerusalem. May he not clothe him-

self with power now, to-morrow, and, by all signs, and wonders, and supernatural agents, destroy Pilate, annihilate the Roman garrison, and reign at once in righteousness and terror? Then will these poor fishermen appear in chief places about his person, and become partakers of his honor.

Of such thoughts their minds were full, and in these circumstances the parable was given. Because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because *they thought* that the kingdom of God should immediately appear, he spoke this parable concerning a *king and a kingdom*. You see how naturally the narrative of the parable grew out of present facts.

But this narrative, while it answered to the misconception of facts on the part of the disciples, on one side, on the other reflects, also, the *true character of the King, and also of the kingdom* of God.

“A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.” This statement presented a very familiar scene to those who heard it. They were subjects of the Roman empire, which embraced many kingdoms. The senate and emperor placed over these whomsoever they would. Office-hunters, crown-seekers, from all over the world, flocked to Rome. Every Jew would think of the family of the Herods in this connection. Nor are *we* at a loss for illustrative facts. It was much like a man going up from Idaho Territory, or Montana, for instance, to Washington, to procure the appointment of Territorial Governor.

Rome, like every other seat of power, was the theater of constant political intrigues. Ambitious

men were always seeking emolument, while others, also interested in the case, would circumvent them. So this nobleman is followed by a message from the citizens of the country, who hated him, protesting against his appointment. Politics in those days, I take it, was just what it is now.

While away from home, pushing forward his ambitious projects, the nobleman must provide for the management of his affairs at home, so that his private fortune might not suffer. The method he pursued was to divide his money amongst his servants, and let each one make the most of the capital intrusted to him. "He called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come." That is, use this capital; trade with it; I trust to your fidelity, sagacity, and enterprise; make what you can.

"And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading." He had been successful in his aspirations, and had returned home a *king*. The first thing he did was to investigate accounts, and have a settlement with the men who had had his business in charge. *With them* the settlement was the more serious on account of the new dignity and power of their master. As a king he could reward more munificently and punish more heavily than as a private citizen, or even a common nobleman. It was a momentous occasion with these servants.

This nobleman represents our Lord. He goes away to receive his kingdom; in his absence his affairs are intrusted to his servants; when he returns with the sovereign dignity and power, he calls them to account for the trusts they held. How strikingly this represents the ascent of Jesus, his long absence, his rich estate on earth (that is, the gospel and the Church) in the hands of his servants the while, and his second coming, when "every one of us shall give account of himself to God!" Nor is the hatred of the citizens wanting to complete the parallel: they will not have this man to reign over them.

"Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds." A very large increase! A grand result! The capital is multiplied in the hands of this man by ten in a comparatively short time. There is proof not only of fidelity, but of capacity and enterprise; there have been much hard work and much painstaking attention. The Lord is well pleased with this servant. "And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities."

Let it be remembered that this man has just now become a king. The responsibility of sovereign administration is upon him; the peace and interests of his government are to be provided for; he must proceed at once to organize the general and municipal administration; he must find trustworthy men for responsible positions. These men must be both faithful and capable.

He has called to account this good servant, and finds the most gratifying proofs of good sense and fidelity. He has it in his power to secure a twofold object—that is, first to reward a faithful servant, and also to secure a good officer of his government. This man is capable of large affairs; he may safely be intrusted with the municipal administration of a district embracing ten cities. The emoluments and revenues of a jurisdiction so considerable will be an ample reward of past services. So the king rewards his servant munificently, and yet in such a manner as still to serve his own ends.

The second has gained *five pounds*, and is appointed over *five cities*. The same general principle controls the reward in this as in the first case; but this farther is to be remarked: *the reward is in the proportion of the success in business*. Ten pounds, ten cities; five pounds, five cities. A district embracing five cities would be large, and yield a handsome revenue. It is a very full acknowledgment of a very fine result—an increase of five upon one. Both the service and reward are up to a most respectable standard. But why not give *him* ten cities as well as the other? Because, first, he is to be rewarded according to what he has done; and, secondly, it does not appear that he is capable of affairs so extensive. He has not the capacity of the other, as the test has discovered. The results of a fair opportunity must decide the merits and capacity of the man; he is elevated to the full extent, and only to the extent, which the results of the test justify.

Is there, in all this, a hint not only as to *degrees*,

but as to the *very nature*, of the heavenly reward? If so, it would seem to follow that the heavenly society is organized. Perhaps governments on earth give some hint of the nature of that organization. There is one archangel, and we read of principedoms, thrones, and powers. Are these so many grades of dignity and authority in celestial government? The apostles are to sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. The saints are to judge angels. It is clear that the heavenly society is not just a collection of unorganized individuals, under the immediate control of God, but that he governs mediately, through subordinate powers.

There need be no concern about employments in heaven. There will be ample scope for the largest and most unresting natures; there will be affairs to carry on; there will be events to shape, combinations to effect, interests to pursue, destinies to achieve—all pure, without doubt, and free from corrupt ambitions and vexatious rivalries; but with what effect puissant spirits in that world may deliver themselves upon events, who can tell? By what combinations may some Wesley bring into events even there a God-honoring idea!

Are the awards of eternity to be made somehow after this sort? If not, what does this side of the parable mean?

After these two good servants came a third, whose pound had gained nothing. He had not squandered it, nor lost it; he had been very careful of it; he had kept it from thieves; he “laid it up;” he had kept it from exposure, clean and bright, “in

a napkin." But he had *gained nothing*—that is, he had failed of the specific object of the trust. The very purpose for which it was placed in his hands was that he should trade with it and make it productive.

But he had become moody, and indulged sinister reflections upon the character of his lord. He became suspicious and evil-minded, as worthless men who know they have an account to render are sure to do. "I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow." Thus he excused himself. But his lord replied: "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?"

I do not understand that he admitted *in fact* the allegations of the servant, but only for the argument, to confound him from his own premises. If I am such a man, still you were my servant, and as such, having accepted this trust from me, it was your duty to act upon my methods; or, at the very least, you might have put it in the *bank*, where it would be on interest, so that I might have *some* advantage of your service. But you have done nothing; you are absolutely *worthless*.

Now observe, this man's fault was that he had done *nothing*—not that he had done some *wrong thing*. He had simply *done nothing*. But his lord charac-

terizes him by a very strong epithet—thou *wicked servant*! Does this represent him in too bad a light? No! for this reason: he was a servant. The duty of the servant is to *render service*. This is the fundamental law of the relation. The servant that performs no service violates the very relation in which he stands, and defeats the purposes of it. *Not to do* is the capital vice of the servant. The indignant master, upon discovery of the fact, can do no less than upbraid him with the term wicked. So far as the relation of the two to each other goes, he is most wicked.

The penalty follows. "Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds." He is not to be trusted farther. The pound in his hands will accomplish nothing; take it from him; take it and give it to some one that will handle it to advantage. Give it to him that hath ten pounds; he is tried; he will make something of it.

But the by-standers expostulated: "Lord, he hath ten pounds." Why give any thing more to him, to swell his enormous gains? He does not need it. Why not give it to some needy man? or at least to this one who has *five pounds*, to put him forward somewhat toward the highest standard? Why not? Why, because I put my money with those who make the best use of it. *That is why!*

"For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him."

This is the text which I announced at the outset. You see how closely it is related to the parable. Its

meaning comes from the parable; and we are now prepared to consider the doctrine which it contains.

I remember that in my youth this text troubled me. "To him that hath shall be given: from him that hath not shall be taken away." It sounded harsh to me. It seemed to favor the prosperous, and trample upon those who were in adversity. It grated upon my sensibilities.

But later I saw things in a better light. I worship Christ in every aspect of his character. I worship him as the Incarnate Truth. He never disguised the truth—never modified nor moderated his utterance of it to accommodate the frailty of my ear. The truth is often rugged, and the Lord gave it ever just as it is; he never hewed it into more acceptable shapes; he never paused to know what reception men would give it, or by what criticism they might judge it; he delivered just the naked truth, and left it to vindicate itself, as it always will in the end. This text stands fully vindicated in its own light, and in the light of all philosophy and observation.

You will observe that it is not just *the mere having or not having* that our Lord approves or condemns, but *having or not having after the opportunity of acquiring has been enjoyed*. A pound has been intrusted to each one, and time allowed for commercial enterprises. After this *opportunity of acquisition*, having or not having is decisive of character; it shows just what the man is, so far as business is concerned. This is a capital point, one on which the meaning of the place hinges; let it not be lost

sight of. What is praised on the one hand and blamed on the other is not the fact of having or not having, abstractly taken. It is the *history* of the case that gives it its significance. The original trust contemplated increase; this was the motive of it; this was the end in view in putting out the pound. Failure in this was the only sin against the law of the transaction. Having or not having, then, *after the opportunity of acquiring has been enjoyed*, is the matter of praise or blame. What is contemplated is *character as it stands in the light of opportunity*.

In the declaration of the text our Lord only *postulates a universal law of life*. The law is this: THE UNIFORM AND NECESSARY TENDENCY OF THRIFT TO GREATER AND GREATER PROSPERITY, AND THE EQUALLY UNIFORM AND NECESSARY TENDENCY OF WORTHLESSNESS TO DEEPER AND STILL DEEPER PENURY.

This law prevails everywhere; it is in all life; it is inexorable; there is no escape from it; in the lowest and in the highest forms of life it is always present, always prevalent. Thrift always goes on to larger and larger acquisition, and worthlessness to deeper and more abject penury. Every acquisition increases resources and facilities of farther acquisition, and all downward movement tends to more rapid descent. Prosperity augments by a twofold force—the arithmetical force, by which profit going into capital increases evermore the ratio of gain to the first investment; and the personal force, the knowledge gained by experience and facility acquired by habit. The same forces

are operative in the reverse direction in the case of the worthless, thriftless man. Then, too, what is scattered by the trifler the other gathers up. To him that hath is given; from him that hath not is taken away—taken from him and given to the other.

I have said that this law is universal, that it is prevalent in all life, from the lowest to the highest forms of it. To show how true this is, let me give you some illustrative facts.

When I was a boy there was upon the north end of our homestead tract a thicket of perhaps a quarter of a mile in extent. It was bisected by a neighborhood road. It was so dense as to seem a very mass of bushes. It was next to impossible, in places, for a boy to push through it, as I know from many experiments; but upon my first visit to the “old place” after the war I was quite amazed to find the “thicket” transformed into an open young forest, consisting of small trees at good distances from each other, the spaces between being entirely open. How has this come about? The answer is at hand. The larger bushes grew into trees, and the smaller, in the course of time, all died.

By what process? Clearly this: the bushes that made the best progress the first year had a great advantage for the second. Here is one, for instance, that in the first year grew to twice the size of its neighbors. Now, it has twice the resources for the next year’s growth; it has twice the number of rootlets gathering nutrition through their innumerable points, and twice as many leaves to inhale car-

bon. A year hence it will be four times the size of the others. So the larger ones, outgrowing the others, had continually a larger ratio of advantage, and became masters of the situation. The smaller ones were at last overtopped, shaded, choked. Their masterful neighbors monopolized soil, and atmosphere, and sunshine. They struggled along for a few years in a growth of ever-lessening ratio to that of the more prosperous ones, their hold upon life becoming more and more feeble. At last their lordly neighbors had so completely appropriated the conditions of life that they perished. They died, and went to fatten the soil for the others; they suffered the universal penalty of *not having*—the penalty of the thriftless. What they had was taken away, and given to the prosperous.

The law obtains at this lowest point of vital phenomena, in the sphere of vegetation; it appears also in animal life—the strongest monopolize the pasture.

It dominates business-life. Two youths were taken together into a store, on equal footing. At the end of a year one was dismissed, and the salary of the other doubled. The one was careless, dilatory, stupid; his services were of no value. The other, sprightly, thoughtful, alert, painstaking, industrious, became invaluable to his employers. The one gained nothing, and what he had—his salary—was taken away; the services of the other were productive, and what was taken from the first was given to him. The one struggled on through a life of poverty, while the other went up to a partner-

ship, and at last to the chief position in a powerful firm.

Two young men in the country—sons of well-to-do citizens—married the same autumn. The father of each gave him a quarter section of excellent land, with a house, and teams, and implements for farming. Their advantages were about equal; their farms were adjoining. Twenty years later one of them owned both the farms, and the other was a miserable renter, living in a hovel upon one corner of the tract he had once owned. The one was thrifty, attentive, frugal, industrious, and soon began to lend money; the other was careless, extravagant, and lazy, and soon began to be a borrower. In a few years his neighbor held a mortgage upon his real estate, and then a few years later, at the inevitable end of the process, held the estate in fee. Worthlessness went on to the utmost depths of penury, and saw the hand of Thrift grasp all it had. "Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds."

Examples might be given from all the trades, professions, and employments. The law holds in all; it holds, also, in all corporations and societies. Wherever vital forces are at work this law is supreme. Corporate life is as much subject to it as individual life; it rules the world; its rewards and punishments are seen everywhere, and felt by all.

It controls in the acquisition of knowledge and in mental development. There is a species of mental thrift which leads to acquisition in an ever-increasing ratio; there is also the converse—a mental thrift-

lessness, that mopes on through life in effeminacy and ignorance, in intellectual penury, in an ever-increasing ratio of disparity with the former. You may tell from the habits of two boys at school how an increasing difference will characterize them, and contrast them more and more strongly to the end of life.

But does this law reach the spiritual plane? Yea, verily. Thrift in spiritual riches is no more obtained without labor than in any other. Worthlessness here goes down into penury as surely as in any other sphere. All holy affections—faith, and conscience, and love, and hope, and purity—grow by faithfulness. Power over temptation comes of watchfulness and prayer. Height of heavenly contemplation increases more and more through meditation and habitual communion with God. Heavenly knowledge is gathered by devout study of the word of God. Power in prayer grows by the habit of earnest prayer. Self-renunciation opens the soul to all divine treasures. Cross-bearing develops spiritual muscle. Religion, as it is subjective in consciousness, is capable of indefinite, if not infinite, increase. O the depth of these riches! But the vain, the self-indulgent, the fashionable, the mercenary, party-loving, theater-going, worldly professor will never attain unto it; such are doomed to the poverty of a mere husky form. The soul preoccupied by worldly vanities has no room for heavenly treasures; the heart exercised so greatly by carnal enterprises makes no increase of spiritual goods.

In the objective results of Christian labor increase

is equally certain, and perhaps more apparent. By the time a man has brought a hundred souls to Christ, his "sons in the gospel" have, in the aggregate, done fifty times as much, perhaps; to the end of time the results will multiply. Through great labor and self-denial a man establishes and carries on a Sunday-school in a neglected neighborhood; at the end of twenty years, one useful preacher and fifty successful Sunday-school workers have gone from under his hand, and a thousand souls are saved. In the meantime, the spiritual sluggard, barren and unhappy in his own experience, has been an incubus upon the activities and enterprises of the Church; impoverishment, rather than enrichment, has resulted from his life.

But there is an aspect of this matter which must awaken concern in every thoughtful mind. The Lord has gone up on high to enter upon his kingdom, and will come again in power and great glory. In the meantime, he has put the riches of the gospel *in trust* with his servants. The increase of the gospel, in personal life and at large in the world, depends upon our *fidelity and enterprise*. Through the activity of his people the gospel becomes reproductive. "A dispensation of the gospel" is committed to each one of us. In our hands the grace of God will prosper by our activity and fidelity; or, by our *neglect*, by our stupidity and carelessness, we shall prove ourselves unworthy of the trust with which our Saviour has honored us, and all the riches of grace will be unproductive in our possession.

What an opportunity is ours! This holy capital

put into our Lands consists of the fact of the Incarnation, the blood of Jesus, the Comforter which is the Holy Ghost, all the provisions of grace, all the riches of incarnate love. The merchandise of it is "pardon, and holiness, and heaven." All that a soul may enjoy of God here, all that countless millions made perfect may know and enjoy in eternity, comes of the faithful discharge of this trust. What a pity, what a shame, that such capital should be idle! that such holy, divine riches should not be in the way of heavenly merchandise, multiplying to eternal life! Yet, O how many there are who have "laid it up in a napkin!" They are idle—absolutely idle; they impoverish themselves to actual starvation, and wrong the Master by suffering his money to lie inactive. There are infinite possibilities of increase in the "pound," if it were only in the way of trade in diligent hands; tens of thousands would bless you in heaven forever for the riches that would come of it; but there you hide it—you, *worthless servant that you are*—you have laid it away where it cannot be productive at all, defeating the most gracious purpose of the trust. The kingdom of God suffers irreparable loss by you; you have proved yourself unworthy of the trust.

The Lord will come again, and when he comes he will reckon with us; he will see whether we have honored our trust or not. When the reward of faithful labor shall appear, and the idle miscreant be stripped of his pound, "let no man take thy crown."

The text teaches farther: The turpitude of negli-

gence in the solemn trusts of religion, and the dreadful displeasure of the great Proprietor, who will bring to a just and fearful retribution every guilty delinquent.

Vain will all excuses be then. The trifler may amuse himself with plausible pretexts now, but the guilty sophistry will be confounded upon its own premises at last. Not to fulfill the conditions of the trust is to violate faith; it is to relinquish honor; it damages the Proprietor; it is wicked; it must be *punished*.

The unprofitable servant is punished; he is put to shame publicly; he is dishonored, degraded from service, and proclaimed untrustworthy. What he has is taken away, and he is *left to perish*.

There is a solemn lesson for Churches as well as individuals in the text. It applies, as I have already said, in corporate as well as individual life. As fully implied in the text, and as bearing on the character and destiny of Churches more particularly, I postulate the following:

No mere conservatism can maintain itself amid the active forces of society.

Aggression is the law of active forces; it is the law of vital organism. Whatsoever adventures upon the fortunes of existence, amid the activities of the world, must propose somewhat beyond just merely holding its own. He who settles down just to take care of what he has will soon find that incessant movements on all sides of him have created exigences that encroach at this point and that, incessantly, until disintegration—inevitable, irresistible—will do

its work. Only by *enterprises* that will repair the damage can he even so much as keep things together. Mere defensive wars are failures. Resources are consumed more and more, until exhaustion is the result. Conservatism—that is, a mere defensive policy—has been the ruin of many an empire. Inanition supervenes upon inactivity, and inanition is death.

In my early Christian life I was greatly impressed by a saying which I often heard from the old preachers: "There is no standing still in religion; if you are not going forward you are going backward." It is true; it is solemnly true. In life nothing stands still, and any thing that undertakes it dies. Wherever there is not progression there is retrogression. This is true in individual experience. The actual encroachment of worldly tendencies, which are always active, will destroy the spiritual life unless it be maintained by a constant, earnest movement.

It is equally true in aggregate Church-life, whether of single congregations or more extended organizations. There are Churches now dying of conservatism—perishing from inactivity. Even unoccupied houses decay. Unused machinery in the weather rusts and goes to ruin. Titles fail from *non-user*. Men who go out of employment fall into premature senility. Idle muscle loses activity and force. Commerce without enterprise dwindles. Sluggish Churches decay.

Congregations that have no revival-power languish; the waste of death and removal is not re-

paired. I have known instances where decadence went on to destruction.

Churches that have no missionary zeal or spirit, that enter not into the great love of Christ for all mankind, that partake not of his great labor for the salvation of the world, become dead, and disintegration and decay tread upon the heels of death. The life of the Church is love—the love of God and the souls of men. And love delights in labor; it finds its joy in service. Where there is no labor there is no love, and in losing this the Church loses its life.

The very business of the Church on earth is to propagate the Christian faith, to push forward the victories of the cross, to bring souls to God. Her very constitution contemplates aggressive enterprise. The “pound”—this precious, divine trust—has been committed to her for increase; her Lord looks to her for usury; the management of his estate is committed to her; the souls that she does not win fall under the dominion of Satan.

Any one Church that fails of the full measure of intelligent aggression will see others “take her crown;” or, worse, she will see the great adversary ravaging her Lord’s vineyard, and the souls for whom Christ died perishing on all sides. Depend upon it, such Churches will be visited in wrath. The pound will be taken from them, and given into more faithful hands; the vineyard will be let to husbandmen that will return the fruit.

At the close of the first half century of our existence as a Church in St. Louis it well becomes us to investigate our affairs—to take account of stock.

Can the Lord, with justice to his cause, and in mercy to souls, leave his pound with us? Is he likely to have ten pounds from it in the next decade?

We have nothing to boast of. We have not prospered in our divine merchandise up to the measure of our great opportunity; for we live at a great center of traffic, where the gain of our transactions ought to be tens where it is but units. We can hardly dare to say to the Lord, "Thy pound hath gained *five* pounds;" certainly not ten.

But God is gracious, and gives place of repentance. Certainly his treasury has been in some small measure augmented from St. Louis Methodism; and (I cannot be mistaken) I see signs of new activity in trade. We enter upon a new term of our trusteeship with a deeper sense of its solemn import. New activities are apparent in some directions. May the awe of God be upon us as we go forward into the fifty years in the door-way of which we stand to-day! As we handle his money, may a solemn sense of what its use imports take possession of our hearts!

The sum of all is this:

1. All things are placed in man's possession in crude forms. Here is soil and seed-corn; but much labor must intervene before there is bread. There are trees for timber, earth for brick, stones in the quarry, and ore in the mine; but there must be great enterprise and heavy work before there can be farms, houses, and cities. So in every thing: all *values* are latent till human agency brings them out. No less is this true in the gospel. The conditions of faith and salvation are given, but the result appears

only as man deals with the conditions. Amid the opulence of nature man must famish unless, under his own hand, the crude conditions shall be wrought into shapes available for life; so, under the overwhelming munificence of saving mercies in the gospel, he must perish unless, by his own receptive and active agency, the conditions of spiritual life be brought into actual effect. Thus the gospel is committed to the Church for the salvation of men.

2. Every one of God's people is responsible for its full effect upon himself and for its dissemination amongst others.

3. It prospers more in some hands than in others, both as to its effect on personal character and its diffusion.

4. Some are so carnal, vain, frivolous, worldly, fashionable, and ease-loving, that the gospel gains nothing in their hands.

5. The Lord will take it away from all such. Then will they be left to perish.

6. Such as are truly wise and faithful will rejoice in fivefold, yea, even tenfold, increase in this world, and enter upon the possession of great dignities and rewards in the kingdom of Christ when he shall come in his glory.

7 Churches that are inert, and project no great policies of conquest for the Lord, are doomed.

8. The measure of aggressive labor performed by a Church will be the measure of its growth and power.

9. Churches that are full of godly zeal will enter upon the forfeited possessions of such as are inert and unfaithful.

10. It becomes us all, by prayer, by fasting, by labor, by self-denial, by consecration of money, in self-abnegation, to seek the increase of Christ's kingdom. We are in the world only for this; *for this end alone* is it worth while to live at all; for this we ought to eat, and drink, and sleep, and wake, and rear children, and labor, and make money, and spend money, and watch, and fast, and pray. The full measure of our personal force must be delivered upon this point, if we expect to hear the Lord say, "Well, thou good servant: have thou authority over ten cities."

May no man take our crown!

The Law and the Gospel.

SERMON VI.*

“Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.” Rom. iii. 31.

THERE is very little of metaphysics in the Bible, and the little there is is nearly all in the Epistles of St. Paul; it is confined, almost exclusively, to one topic—justification by faith—and is intended chiefly to show that this doctrine does not conflict with the dignity and claims of the law.

There is to this day much foggy and confused thinking upon this subject. The popular conception of the matter seems to be about this: that the law is all mere justice and severity, and the gospel all mere graciousness. I think that young people almost always regard the law and the gospel as being in antagonism with each other; as if the law were eager to have possession of men to destroy them, and the gospel struggling to recover them from the grasp of the law to bless and save them.

*Delivered before the Virginia Conference, Nov. 22, 1874.

This conception is wholly false. It is not true that the law is all severity, and the gospel all graciousness. On the contrary, the law, in one aspect of it, and, indeed, in its very nature and design, is as much an expression of the divine beneficence as the gospel is; and, on the other hand, the gospel, in one aspect of it, is as much an expression of the divine severity as the law. There is no contest over men between the law and the gospel; they are in perfect harmony at all points. Faith does not make the law void, but establishes it.

To make this affirmation of the text good is the object of this Sermon. For this purpose it will be necessary to give,

I. AN ANALYSIS OF THE LAW, BOTH AS TO ITS NATURE AND FUNCTIONS. This done, we shall be prepared to enter directly upon the inquiry, Is the law made void by the gospel?

1. *The law is an assertion of the divine authority over intelligent creatures.* I need not say that the law in question is the moral law. It embodies the will of the Creator with respect to the conduct of his creatures.

2. The law is not only an assertion of the authority of God; *it also postulates the ultimate truth with regard to moral relations.* The divine will is not capricious; it is coincident with the absolute truth.

What is the law, reduced to its last statement? Moses gave a very close analysis of it in the Decalogue; but Christ reduced it to the last analysis in that great saying, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and

with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself,” was not first said by Christ; it stands in the Old Testament Scriptures; but it was reserved to Christ to say, “This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” That these statements of Christ concerning these two commandments are true, that all the law does indeed hang on them, will appear to any one who will take the pains to review the Ten Commandments. These commandments, given to Moses in the mount, are God’s own synopsis of the law; they were written by his finger upon two tables of stone. The first four were engraved on one table, and are called the commandments of the first table; the remaining six were engraved upon another, and are denominated the commandments of the second table. Examine these: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me;” “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image;” “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain;” “Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy.” These commandments of the first table are against idolatry, against image-worship, against the profanation of the most holy Name, and require the consecration of a fixed portion of time to the Creator. They all have respect to the duties we owe to God.

Now, tell me, if any man loves God with his whole heart, will he not keep all these? and if a man loves his neighbor as himself, will he not keep all the commandments of the second table, which forbid murder, theft, and all other acts injurious to a fellow-creature? It is most true, indeed, that all the law is fulfilled in one word—LOVE. He who loves God with all his strength, and his neighbor as himself, will fulfill the law of his own nature in keeping the law of God.

In this law of love is found the *ultimate truth* with regard to moral relations: where it is realized each individual cherishes the welfare of all others, and the full measure of his powers goes to swell the sum of universal good. The law, then, is not a mere capricious assertion of authority; it postulates the ultimate moral truth.

But this proposition is not to be understood as in any degree mitigating the fact of the divine authority. If the will of God is coincident with ultimate truth, that will is no less sovereign and almighty in maintaining the law, which is itself, also, the truth. The majesty and magistracy of God must not be set aside by a vain philosophy. The law is the truth, given by divine legislation, and enforced by supreme, executive, sovereign authority and power.

3. *The law is the utterance of the moral nature of God.* Mr. Wesley called it a transcript of the divine mind; my proposition puts the same truth in other terms. The ultimate moral truth is subjective in God. In the law God simply utters *himself* as to his moral nature. "God is love," and "love is the fulfilling

of the law," as we have already seen. Love is not, properly, an attribute of God, but the very essence of his moral nature. The more deeply you consider this the more clearly will you see its truth. Every one of the moral attributes of the Creator is but a phase of love; for, what is truth but love speaking the words that are right? what is mercy but love condescending to the unworthy and the miserable? what, indeed, is justice itself but love governing the universe for the highest ends? And the law is love brought into expression in the conduct of intelligent beings. The law, then, is the utterance of the moral nature of God.

4. *The law solves the problem involved in the relation of the individual liberty to the common welfare.* Political philosophy has been embarrassed by this problem from the first. Men in society are in such relations to each other that each one, in pursuing his own ends and seeking to gratify his own desires, is liable to trench upon the rights, to encroach upon the possessions, and disturb the peace, of others. To insure the public welfare, therefore, private liberty must be restrained. The general good demands a thousand checks upon the freedom of personal ambition and impulse. In business, in social intercourse, in the gratification of appetite, in the pursuit of honors and pleasures, a man must be held under repression, lest he should jostle and damage his neighbor; but let the law of God—the law of love—be realized in character and become universal, and the conflict ceases. This law, realized in consciousness, and giving impulse to desire and pursuit,

will but enhance the common good, through the means of personal freedom; for each one will find his own happiness in promoting the well-being of others. Love finds its blessedness in blessing; it is more pained in the injury of others than in its own calamities; it seeks its own in contributing to the common wealth. Give the man who loves his neighbor perfect liberty! Never fear *him*. The common weal will only be enhanced by his freedom. Who ever thinks of putting restraints upon a mother, in the midst of her family? If only she has knowledge and wisdom enough to understand what is best, there is no fear. *Trust* her with her children; let her be perfectly free; just let her have her own way! There is no other possible means of insuring the welfare of her children comparable to that. She shall do what she pleases!

Did the law of God but rule in all hearts, each one would contribute to the utmost of his power and resources to the welfare of the whole. He would do this of his own suggestion; he would do it freely; it would be the outcome of his personal liberty. In that case, the largest personal liberty would insure the largest possible sum of personal and universal good.

It follows that the law gives this divine solution of the problem involved in the relation of the individual liberty to the common welfare. It secures at once the largest conceivable measure of freedom to the individual and the largest possible amount of good to the whole. Indeed, the common good is assured by the very liberty of the individual; it is

enhanced by this very means in the highest possible degree. Let God once reign in all hearts, and you may turn every man loose. In such a case, any restraint on one must diminish the sum of the common blessedness; for all the free activities in the whole would contribute to the general fund.

5. *The law is the condition of life.* This proposition is incontestable and universal. The law does not furnish the condition of salvation to the sinner, but this fact does not affect the truth of our proposition. It is the universal and unalterable condition of life. This is true, whether you take the word condition in its popular or in its scientific import. "What saith the law? He that doeth these things shall live by them." On the condition of keeping the law life is secure. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." He who keeps the law lives, he who violates it dies. God has never assured life to any while they live in sin. "The wages of sin is death." So, also, in the scientific use of the term; life is conditioned upon the law, and is realized in the law. In the very fact of conformity to the law there is life, and any departure from it is death.

To see this clearly, we must contemplate it in the light of a truth already established in this Sermon. The essence of the law is love—pure, divine love. It is not that passion which is sometimes misnamed love, and which is only lust, but such holy affection as that which brought Christ down from heaven for us. It is a matter of consciousness that both purity and peace are found in this. In the beneficent affections there is inward harmony, while selfish pas-

sions are in their own nature a cause of torment. The subjective state of the man in whose character the law of love is the supreme fact is that which the Bible calls life, and the inward discord, impurity, and torment of selfish passion is the very state which is named death. It is the living, conscious death, in which being itself is perverted and becomes a curse—it is the death “that never dies.” How manifestly true it is, then, that life is conditioned upon the law—that the law, indeed, inwrought into character, is the very spiritual life itself. It is the life of God in the soul, for the law is the utterance of the moral life of God.

Not only is the law incorporated into personal character, the fountain of spiritual life, but it is the basis of all good relations between intelligent creatures, and the condition of both harmony and happiness in the social state. It secures life objectively as well as subjectively: “For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile; let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.” If you can imagine a state of society in which all are elevated to the perfect standard of the law, life will abound within and without. All must be purity and peace, confidence and joy. None need stand in the attitude of defense—none can have occasion of fear, or even of suspicion. Unruffled happiness must reign in the soul, and undisturbed tranquillity in society. In the inward domain there can be naught to embitter, in the outer world naught to alarm. Fullness of life

arises within, and fullness of peace responds from without.

Nor can I doubt that this constitutes the very blessedness of the heavenly state. My conception of heaven is not what it was some years ago. Then my ideas of it were formed chiefly from the semi-sensuous, poetical descriptions given in the last chapters of the Apocalypse. True, I still cling to these, and enjoy that side of the coming glory as intensely as I did then. I love to think of the "great white throne," and of the river of life; of the sea of glass, and of the fine linen, white and clean, which is the righteousness of saints; of the house where the many mansions are, and of the angels and men redeemed from the earth, the just made perfect. I love to hear, in imagination, the music, and the worship, and the shouting, which shall be like the voice of many waters and mighty thunders. Nor do I doubt that there is a place called heaven, "the metropolis of Jehovah's empire," where infinite creative skill has brought into objective expression the highest, divinest types of beauty and grandeur for the delectation of the children of God. In this home of the just there is nothing to offend. The splendor of it is but feebly suggested in the fact that the very foundations of the outer walls—the meanest stones in all the city—are emerald, and jacinth, and sardonyx, and beryl; the meanest stones are gems, and the pavement of the streets is gold.

But while I still revel in these gorgeous pictures, there is now a view of heaven which seems to me

to be infinitely more precious. There is one passage in the First Epistle of St. John that gives a deeper insight into heaven, and a more resplendent vision of its glory. It gives not the outward expression, but the inner, essential glory. These are the words; he that hath ears to hear, let him hear: "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." Not *where* a man is, but *what* he is, is the great matter. No external condition can insure felicity. There must be the inward adaptation; there must be capacity for blessedness. What would heaven be to your horse? He would not exchange a ten-acre meadow for it all. No doubt heaven is a place, but much more is it a state. There is a magnificent objective side to it, but in its essence it is subjective. Let the young people of my congregation hear me, especially when I say that the great thing in every man's case is *character*. Not *where* a man is, but *what* he is—not what a man *has*, but what he *is*, ought to concern him chiefly. "The kingdom of heaven is *within you*." Hear what I say: *It is character that makes destiny*. I shall never forget how nature, in its most beautiful forms, gloomed before me when the guilt of my sins was upon me, nor how the world flamed into a new beauty, how the very forests seemed touched with celestial light, when I first felt the peace of God within. The truth is, the *subjective* projects its own light upon the *objective*, and, as to our delight in them, things are very much what we ourselves make them. IT IS CHARACTER THAT MAKES DESTINY.

To be like the Lord Jesus is my highest conception of heaven, and to be like him is to have a character modeled upon the law.

There is another Bible description of heaven which lies in the line of my thought. It is in the Apocalypse: "He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." This is not mere poetry, it is literal truth. I shall, if I am saved at last, find myself in possession of all things. All heaven and all worlds will be my property. The very angels will belong to me, and all redeemed men. I shall—I say it with awe—inherit even God! Yet will my title not be exclusive; every saved soul will enjoy the same vast property. But my title will not be a mere fractional interest, reduced by these innumerable participants to an infinitesimal share. The great domain of the universe will be mine wholly. It will be yours wholly, also, as well as mine. What strange paradox is this! Ah, my brother! it is true as strange, and the fact lies in the deepest philosophy of spiritual life. We shall find the explanation in the tenure by which our final possessions are to be held.

The tenure is love. What! are you not satisfied with the title? I tell you it is the most indefeasible and the safest in the universe, and constitutes the most *real* possession. Your property that you hold in fee and in the best securities may stand in a defective title, to be defended by litigation, with a thousand costs and vexations, and in the end be lost. At any rate, death will wrest it from you.

At the very best, it is a loose possession, lying outside of you, and it may be but a very small part of it actually utilized to any substantial benefit.

But love is the soul's actual grasp and conscious possession of things. It is the inward title and vital hold of its object. He who loves his neighbor as himself has him for his property, with all his riches, his virtues, his attainments. What an appropriating possession have I taken of the man whom I love as I love myself! By this tenure shall I enter upon the ownership of all things at last.

But the glorious wonder is my title will not interfere with yours, nor yours with mine, nor will the possession of either diminish the value of the estate to the other; on the contrary, it will enhance it. There is a divine law by which participation does not diminish the property of the individual, but multiplies it by the number of participants. Imagine a man whose property amounts to millions; but he is a solitary man; in all the world there is not one that he loves; he occupies his mansion alone. Of what value is wealth to him? What enjoyment has he in it? All may be summed up in a very few narrow words. Gratified cupidity, and satiated appetite, and artistic taste, give the full measure. But let the participation of wife and children come in, and the value of every dollar is multiplied by the wonderful arithmetic of love, and it is only the more fully his as it is theirs also. So will it be in heaven; I shall own all things. So will you, and I shall own you, and you will own me; and I shall own your ownership of all things

and of me. Thus your participation, so far from being an intrusion, or abstracting from my possessions, will only enhance my property by the full measure of your own enrichment. I shall enjoy your enjoyment of it as I shall my own, so that your presence and participation will double the estate for me. And the participants will be countless multitudes. O heaven! when shall I enter upon thy perfect bliss?

How shallow is the philosophy of the selfish man! He imagines that to give up his selfish aims and contests would be his ruin. To him it seems that to sink self would be to sacrifice every thing.

But let us see. Compare the range of the selfish man's enjoyments with that of one who loves his neighbor as he loves himself. The enjoyments of the selfish man are bounded by the limit of his own acquisitions and attainments; the distinctions he has reached, the wealth he has amassed, and the gratification of his appetites and tastes, give the sum of his happiness, and this is to be subtracted from by the amount of his losses and his baffled plans and defeated hopes. But the man who loves his neighbor as himself enters into the happiness of all others; he enjoys all the prosperity that he knows of; the successes and triumphs of others he enjoys as if they were his own; the range of his enjoyments is limited not by his acquisitions, but by his capacities; he lays the world under contribution to himself—he draws his revenues from the universe. Such is the magic power of love; it possesses itself of all the wealth of others. A

mother enjoys the happiness of her children more than she does her own—ay, perhaps more than they do themselves. A fatal mistake is that of the selfish man. If he could only rise to the level of this great truth, what a new world he would find himself in! It seems to him that to sink self would be ruin. Not so; for just where the self goes down consciousness emerges upon a higher plane and enjoys the freedom of the universe. With infinitely multiplied sources of wealth, there comes also the augmented capacity of enjoyment.

So true is it that the law is the condition of life; it is the very fountain of celestial blessedness. It opens the resources of the universe, and invests us in possession of all things. It is the soul's true enfranchisement. If the truth shall make you free, you shall be free indeed. It constitutes the very life of heaven itself.

It is true, then, as I said in the introduction, that the law is, in one aspect of it—and, indeed, in its nature and purposes—as really an expression of the divine beneficence as the gospel is. "The law was ordained to life." The very purpose of its ordination was to secure the spiritual and eternal life and well-being of intelligent creatures.

Now, you may say, It is plain that the law was ordained to life, and, if so, it is beyond all question an expression of the divine beneficence. If so, perhaps you may be disposed to infer that the law can never injure you—that you have nothing to fear from it. Let us see.

Take an illustration from the domain of physical

law. Even this, also, was ordained to life. Take the law of gravitation—that great universal law by which all the forces of nature are regulated and held in check. It is evidently a most beneficent law, and was ordained to life. Life would not be possible amid the forces of nature if they had not metes and bounds set to them by this law. All loose objects on the surface of the earth would otherwise be forever quiescent, or else thrown about at random, so that no man could calculate upon their movements. No mechanic could know what apparatus might be necessary to elevate beams or stones to their places in the wall. One could not even tell the exertion necessary to set one foot before the other. But with this universal law dominating nature with absolute uniformity, the little child soon becomes at home in the world, and learns how to adjust himself to its movements. Now, suppose some man should say, It is clear to me that the law of gravitation was ordained to life—that its very purpose was beneficent. I have, therefore, nothing to fear from this law; it can never hurt me. In this mood, standing on some “pinnacle of the temple,” the devil of presumption comes to him and says, “Jump off; the law of gravitation will never hurt you; it is a beneficent law; never fear.” He makes the leap. Imagine the consequences. Or he stands upon a mountain slope in the track of a descending avalanche, and, folding his arms, says, “I will just stand still; the law that moves the descending man is a beneficent one.” In five minutes he will be a mass of bloody jelly. The truth

is that all of God's laws are ordained to life—they have all a beneficent purpose; but the beneficent effect itself depends upon the uniformity and certainty of their execution. If this uniformity were broken up by exceptions in favor of the thoughtless or the wayward, the result would be such confusion as would defeat the beneficent purpose. A man must know that a given effect will follow a given condition always and everywhere, or he can never feel secure. It is, then, in the uniformity of its execution that the beneficent effect of the law is assured. But it follows from this that he who disregards the law must be destroyed by it. These laws of nature go forward to their objective point under the momentum of Omnipotence. He who adjusts himself to them has the full advantage of their beneficent design; but if any man shall dare to stand in their way, he must die the death.

Law is given to man for life; but with respect to the law he is free. The purpose of God is that we should *adjust ourselves to the law*; otherwise, we shall find that the law ordained to life will operate our death. It will do this by virtue of the very fact in which its beneficent design appears—that is, the uniformity of its operation. This is true, in both the physical and the spiritual domain. The law is life to him who adjusts himself to it, and death to him who violates it.

Especially is the moral law enforced by a penal administration: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." It is maintained by sovereign, divine authority.

II. Now, we are prepared to approach the question of the text: "DO WE THEN MAKE VOID THE LAW THROUGH FAITH?" and to examine as to the truth of the reply: "GOD FORBID: YEA, WE ESTABLISH THE LAW."

I have said that the law is the condition of life, and that this is a universal truth. Everywhere and at all times it is the condition of life. To the un-fallen the condition is practicable, but to the fallen it is not. The law is above them; it is impossible to them; they are under a spiritual paralysis which incapacitates them for its observance.

The law is the condition of life for the un-fallen, but it is not the condition of pardon for the guilty. It contains no remedy for the depraved.

But the gospel is also a law. If the law is the condition of life for the un-fallen, *the gospel is the law of recovery for the fallen.*

The gospel is not a mere random, uncalculating, indiscriminating distribution of saving mercies; it is a method—it is *God's method of saving the lost*. In the processes of recovery he adheres as invariably to his own established method as in the case of the moral law. What the method, as it applies to infants and the heathen, may be in all respects, we may not know. We know that all who are saved are saved by the Atonement, and, as to those to whom the gospel comes, salvation is conditioned upon repentance and faith. In all cases we know, also, that God adheres to his own method.

As the gospel is the law of recovery for the lost, the question is whether this method is in conflict

with the original law, which is the condition of life. In the salvation of the sinner, is the moral law made void?

If so, it must be in one of two particulars: either,

First. That it disregards the penal authority of the law, and sets aside the penal administration; or,

Second. That it relieves its subjects of the obligation of obedience and holy living.

If the first be true, it must appear in the method of pardon; if the second be true, it must appear in the moral processes of salvation as they appear in personal character.

Let us look into the facts. Our first inquiry is with respect to the law of pardon as it relates to the penal administration. Does it discredit the moral law? does it condemn, or dishonor, the punitive authority? Let us see how the case stands.

The terms of the law are: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." The inviolable claim of justice is concerned here. Death is the penalty of sin. If the penalty should fail in any one case, the justice of God is impeached. No greater calamity could befall the universe; for the infinite integrity of the divine justice is the sole guaranty of the peace of the universe. If it shall fail in any one case, it is not infinite; one failure would be conclusive proof of its imperfection. If the divine justice is imperfect, universal disorder impends. The law must be uniform to insure its beneficent end, as we have already seen. Heaven and earth may fail, but not one jot or tittle of the law shall fail. Death always follows sin; there are no exceptional cases; there never was one, and

never will be—never can be. No sinner ever entered heaven over the trampled and dishonored law. Every sin that is committed is followed by death.

The method of pardon provided in the gospel meets the case. In the atoning sacrifice of Christ the demand of the law is met in the full measure of its penalty. The incarnate Son of God appears for man before the law; he offers his life for man's life. What a solemn, yea, what an awful, spectacle is this! The Son of God invites the stroke of justice impending over man upon his own head. If the case had been submitted to me, I should have said that for him to stand and proclaim himself the representative of man would be enough. I should have thought, *a priori*, that the imperious law would bow before him, and turn aside from its demand. But no. Even he, standing in the sinner's place, must touch the sinner's doom. Justice, supreme, infinite, implacable, smote even him; the law vindicated itself even on his honored head.

The supremacy of the law is thus established before heaven and earth in the person of the Son of God, who takes the penalty of the sinner upon himself. Do we not, then, establish the law in the method of pardon? How glorious is the law! how inviolable, since this Divine Victim was sacrificed to its penal supremacy! Behold the severity of the gospel! It gave the Lord of glory to death to meet the claim of justice; it proposes no mitigation, but pays the "mighty debt."

In the pardon of sin we see that the honor of the law is fully maintained. Is it so in the processes of

salvation, as they appertain to individual character? Are the claims of the law released so far as the obligation of obedience is concerned?

As to those classes to whom the gospel does not come, to whose understandings its claims are not addressed— as idiots, infants, and the heathen—we are in ignorance of the method by which the benefits of the Atonement become effectual in their case; but in the case of those who receive the message we know what the method is, for, let it be repeated, the gospel, too, is a law—the law of recovery for the sinner. No man is saved by the gospel except by its method. Salvation is conditioned upon the method: “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish;” “he that believeth hath life.”

Behold, again, the severity of the gospel! Its demand upon us for repentance is absolutely inexorable. To “perish” is the alternative. But repentance is the abandonment of sin, and sin is the transgression of the law. The sinner must return to the law. No matter if the sin be dear as the right eye, or valuable as the right hand, the very eye must be plucked out, the hand cut off. This inexorable demand is in the law of recovery; its voice is imperious as the thunder-tone of Sinai. Repentance is consummated in faith. The two are vitally related to each other, and are, indeed, parts of the same process. Repentance is the Godward movement of the soul, and just where the soul touches consciously upon God it passes into faith. Faith takes Christ for all that he is, takes God for all that he is. In faith the soul opens itself to all divine communica-

tions and energies. Faith is the condition of receptivity toward God.

Upon this the new birth supervenes. What is the new birth? Can you tell me just what is accomplished in a man when he is converted? The apostle has given us the statement in inspired words; hear them: "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." The love of God shed abroad in the heart—that is the new birth. But love is the sum of the law, and God is love. In the conversion of the soul the law becomes subjective in character. Experimental and practical religion are vitally related to each other. In experimental religion, the law is inwrought into the inner life; in practical religion, it appears in the outer life. The same divine finger that wrote the law on the tables of stone, now, in the work of salvation, writes it on the heart of the believer. Reformation of life and manners accompanies conversion. Where the work is genuine a holy life is the result.

Is the law made void in this? Nay, verily, it is established. *The law is an assertion of the divine authority*, and the gospel brings its subjects to a willing and joyful obedience. *The law postulates the ultimate truth with regard to moral relations*, and through the gospel the ultimate truth becomes incorporated into character. *The law is the utterance of the moral nature of God*, and through the gospel we become "partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the word through lust." *The law solves the problem involved in the relation of the individual liberty with the common weal.* In Christ the

truth makes men free, and they are free indeed. This liberty is never the cloak of licentiousness; its impulses are the inspiration of the law of God. *The law is the condition of life*; the gospel simply brings men back to this condition; it establishes the law.

Many, no doubt, misconceive the very nature of salvation. When they think of being saved, they think only of escaping hell-torments after death, and entering into some beautiful world where there is no suffering nor death; but to escape torment, and live in a world free from suffering, is not of the essence of salvation. These things are necessary and invariable *incidents* of salvation; but they are not of the *essence* of it. *Salvation is a fact of character*; it is subjective; it is found in the attainment of holiness. Inward purity is the essence of it, and outward conformity to the will of God the expression of it.

In the great work of grace by which we are saved the gospel does what the law cannot do, but not in any manner that contravenes the law. It honors the law's penalty, most solemnly and awfully, in the death of our august Substitute; it also respects the sacred claim of the law in the method upon which salvation is conditioned, in the inexorable law of repentance and faith. Beyond all this, it brings the resources of grace, in the powerful operation of the Holy Spirit, to recover men from their depraved condition, and reproduce in them the purity of the law.

The gospel takes man, fallen from the law, guilty.

polluted, lost, and elevates him again to the plane of the law; *it restores him to the law.*

“Do we then make void the law through faith? GOD FORBID: YEA, WE ESTABLISH THE LAW.”

I have said that the law is as really an expression of beneficence as the gospel; and so it certainly is, for it was ordained to the same end—that is, to life. But it ought to be added that the gospel is a more tender and affecting exhibition of goodness than the law. Depraved as man is, he suffers a spiritual paralysis, which renders him incapable of immediate divine communion, and insensible to that direct communication of God which the law is; he is not susceptible of divine influences; he is in an unresponsive condition toward God. It was necessary, therefore, that a method of salvation should be resorted to in which God should approach man through his natural sympathies and sensibilities. To this end the eternal Son became incarnate; the infinite pity looked upon man through human eyes, and spoke to him in the sorrow-burdened tones of a human voice; he took our nature, and in it suffered the most dreadful death on our account. We have him evermore before our eyes, perspiring blood in the garden, and dying on the cross; we see him perpetually treading the wine-press of the wrath of God alone. He suffers all this agony *for us sinners, and for our salvation*; and this agony interprets the heart of God to us in a human language that we can understand. God comes upon us on the side of our natural sensibilities, and opens a way for himself through our human sympathies—

so tender, so touching, is this expression of the divine love.

What is more sublime than the prophetic declaration, "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall *be satisfied?*" Is not this the grandest fact in heaven itself—Christ's own gratified contemplation of the fruit of his agony? He will remember all—the bloody sweat, the buffeting, the crown of thorns, the scourging, the hour and power of darkness, the anguish of the cross, the awful hiding of his Father's face—all, all, he will remember; but around him will be the "innumerable multitude" saved from sin, saved from the "second death," and raised to a destiny whose joy and grandeur only he will comprehend; and he will *be satisfied*. This gratified contemplation of the fruit of his sufferings will be Christ's own eternal, ineffable heaven. This is the "joy of the Lord."

My brethren of the Virginia Conference, you are permitted to enter into the participation of Christ's labors, and you have the promise that you shall, if you are faithful, enter into his joy. His joy is found in the fruit of his toil; so shall yours be the fruit of your own labor and of his. O let us emulate the self-sacrifice of Christ! He avoided no toil, evaded no shame, sought no ease in the labors of his great enterprise; he did not even shun the garden or the cross. Think of this, you who have the hardest circuits, and are in the deepest poverty! think of this, you whose toil is the hardest, and whose cross is the heaviest! Behold, the Lord is now gone up, and is beginning even now to reap

the fruit of his pain! The multiplying millions of his redeemed are gathering around him; he looks to you to swell the number. What if your labor be in pain and poverty? so was his. What if you are despised by men? so was he. The time is at hand when you, too, shall be called up to hear that supreme word which will create your heaven: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Thou hast been with him in toil; thou shalt also, in thy measure, with him gather in the harvest and enter into the joy.

The Corn of Wheat.

SERMON VII.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." John xii. 24.

THE Lord was about to be crucified. The last week of his life was spent in Jerusalem and the suburban village of Bethany, the residence of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead.

The Feast of the Passover was approaching; the city was thronged with those who had come up to the great annual festival. Many had come from remote regions: for then, as now, the Jews were scattered over the whole civilized world, engaged largely in commercial pursuits. But the great feast brought them in multitudes from remotest regions, annually, to the City of David.

The strangers coming to the city at this particular time found the resident community agitated by the presence of a personage whose character and claims had produced violent antagonisms. For the most part, he was despised by the higher classes;

but the common people were strongly attracted by him. His hold upon the masses aggravated the hatred of those who were accustomed to be considered leaders of opinion.

A recent event had greatly augmented his influence in Jerusalem. Lazarus had been raised by him from the dead in Bethany. This miracle was a very striking one. Lazarus was known in Jerusalem. People of the city were with the sisters of the dead man, on a visit of condolence, at the time when he was raised. He had been dead four days; he was buried. What a sensation must have been produced by his sudden emergence from the tomb, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes! The visitors from the city would not fail to fill Jerusalem with the wonder. The dead man himself, reappearing upon the streets, must have been the object of universal interest. The concourse assembled at the feast not long after must have heard of this event as the principal fact of recent occurrence. The man who was raised from the dead and the man who raised him were objects of universal and deep interest.

This irritated his enemies, and the very anger and agitation of them but excited public attention the more. By reason of the raising of this man, many Jews "went away and believed on Jesus;" and his mortified enemies said, "See, we prevail nothing. The learned men and wise, accustomed to teach, and sitting in Moses's seat, have decided against the pretensions of this Jesus, but the world goes after him." It was an indignity they could

not bear; it discredited them, and they consulted to put both Jesus and Lazarus to death. Their very rage fanned the flame of public interest.

To make matters worse, just when these men were in their heat of anger, another event swelled the volume of public interest in Christ. "Much people, who had come up to the feast," made a public demonstration of homage to him. He had evidently passed the night at Bethany. This, I think, was his custom when in Jerusalem. His *home* was probably with the lovely family of Bethany. In the morning, on his way to the city, he was met by a vast concourse of people. A colt was provided, whereon never man sat, and as Jesus rode forward toward the city, the enthusiasm of the multitude broke over all bounds. They cast branches of palm, and even their garments, down in the way before him, and broke forth in shouts of adulation. They probably accompanied him through the streets of the city, preceding him, following him, and surrounding him, with loud acclamations of homage. The whole city was agog with the event.

No wonder that strangers present should become curious about him, and that certain Greeks, who had come up to the feast, hunted up one of his disciples, and requested of him to secure them an interview: "Sir, we would see Jesus."

Philip seems to have hesitated, but consulted his brother Andrew, and the two together communicated the request of the Greeks to the Master. As to whether they were admitted to an interview or not, the narrative is not explicit; but it is generally

believed that they were, and that the discourse which contains the text which I have announced was delivered to them. Trench thinks he discovers some accommodation to Greek habitudes of thought in the illustration of spiritual truth by processes of nature. This, however, seems to me to be far-fetched, inasmuch as the same fact often occurs in parables spoken only in the presence of native Jews.

The text takes its meaning from the immediate context, the verse just preceding and that next following it. The passage preceding it is in these words: "And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified." These words evidently contemplate his death, now so near at hand; but how striking is the phraseology! No man speaks of his death as a *glorification*. Why Christ should consider his death in that light will appear as we proceed.

But verse 25, which follows the text, is connected with it as vitally as the 23d, and affects its meaning no less: "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."

In view of these preliminary and preparatory statements, I proceed to say:

I. THE TEXT CONTAINS THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT.

The sacrificial death of Christ provides the conditions in which man, perishing in his sins, may be restored to an incorruptible and eternal life. The saved man lives by the death of Christ. This is a

general statement of the doctrine of Atonement; but let us remark, more particularly:

1. The death of Christ *removes all legal obstructions out of the way*, so that sin may be pardoned consistently with all the claims of the law upon the sinner. The penalty of sin is death, and Christ died not for himself, for he had no sin, but for man; "he bore our sins in his own body on the tree;" "he suffered death for us;" "he, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man;" he suffered in our place. Beware of any theory which takes away from the death of Christ this meaning. The whole system of saving doctrine goes by the board if Christ did not suffer vicariously as our Substitute. He met the claim of justice against us, so that now "God can be just and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

Inasmuch as Christ has suffered for our sin, God can pardon sin—that is to say, he can hold those guiltless whose guilt the Divine Substitute took upon himself.

I do not say that our Lord suffered as much as all his people must have suffered in eternity if he had not died, thus furnishing an exact "commercial equivalent" for their penalty; but I do say that in his death he undertook to represent man and to bear man's guilt, and that, in view of his divine dignity and glory, his suffering had a value which makes it right and just that those who believe in him should have remission of the sentence. All the ends of a penal administration are met and provided for by his death, whenever a guilty man is restored to the

favor of God on his account. He is, therefore, *our Substitute*.

2. The incarnation and sufferings of Christ bring about conditions which make the moral and spiritual renovation of man practicable.

(1) *The restoration of good relations between man and his Maker* having been provided for by the sacrificial character of the Atonement, *the way was open for the work of the Holy Spirit*. So long as forgiveness of sin was unprovided for, any touches of grace upon the inward life would have been unavailing. The gift of the Spirit to a man in hopeless guilt, for whom no method of pardon had been provided, could have been but a pretense of mercy, a mockery of his despair; but, now that the Substitute has suffered, and pardons are freely dispensed to all who come to God by Christ, the agency of the Spirit conveys divinest significance of love; it looks to effectuate the end for which Christ came; it awakens the conscience, shows the sinner his guilt and shame, and quickens the moral sensibilities; it starts the spiritual nature into such measures of vitality as make repentance and faith possible.

Nor could actual salvation be realized in the case of any one man, in the absence of this ministration of the Spirit. Dead in trespasses and sins, no spiritual movement could originate in him without these touches of prevenient grace; he could have no goodwill toward God but for this quickening grace going before to awaken him to a sense of his sin and a knowledge of the verities of eternity.

(2) The active priesthood of Christ, ever living to

make intercession for us, is involved in the Atonement. In this office he is charged with all affairs between man and God; he is at once the bloody Sacrifice and the officiating Priest; he "died for sin once," but is "a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec;" he offers, perpetually, the "one sacrifice" before the throne—thus making atonement evermore.

(3) The incarnation and death of our Lord *so relate the Infinite Sovereign to his depraved and guilty subjects on the earth as to make faith possible*. Salvation is realized in *faith*. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." It is in faith that man realizes his restoration to God; destitute of this, he is, in fact, alien from God. Unbelief is, in its very nature, alienation from God. The Atonement, therefore, must not only remove the legal barriers out of the way of pardon, but must provide such conditions as will make faith possible to man. Perhaps the most fundamental fact of a depraved state is the inappetency for divine things—the incapacity of faith. There is no power of spiritual perception; the faith-faculty is in paralysis. Fallen man lives in the senses; his is a life of sense, not a life of faith.

In the Incarnation God comes down to him and manifests himself in a sensible way; he takes on human forms of expression, and operates through human organs; he looks upon us with human eyes, but the expression of them is divine. A human finger touches the blind eye, but does God's work upon it—restores it to sight. A human voice speaks

to Lazarus; but it is God's power that it conveys to the dead man in his grave, bringing him back to life. In this presence we become conscious of God; and this Holy One takes our sin upon himself, receives our penalty into his own person, dies for us. But for such proof of love his approach would frighten us; guilty terrors would drive us from him. But he manifests himself to us, and we know that *he is*; he suffers for us, and we know that *he is Love*; he appeals to our human sensibilities, and the conditions of faith are completed in the gracious and enlightening presence of the Holy Spirit.

But all hinges upon the fact of his vicarious sufferings. All the sources of redeeming agency are in his sacrificial death. Atonement is made on the cross, and all else that is involved in it must be referred to that as the radical fact out of which it grows, and from which it draws its vitality. *We live by his death.* This sums the doctrine of Atonement.

This doctrine is "the power of God and the wisdom of God to them that believe;" but "to the Jews it is a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness." Even now, still, after the accumulated testimony of eighteen centuries has attested its divine fitness to human need, as the chief factor in the highest civilization, and as the saving power in individual experience, the self-conceited and skeptical continue to reiterate the allegation. To thousands it is still "an offense;" it is rejected by them as irrational and against nature.

Some years since I met with a young man who was a representative of this class. He had just com-

pleted his college-course in an Eastern university. Whatever else he had or had not acquired, he brought home a profound sense of his own powers. He had formed opinions on all the great questions of life and destiny, and had not the slightest misgiving as to the accuracy of them. *He knew.* Immature as his opinions were, and imperfect as was his grasp of philosophy, he had got quite beyond the period of inquiry and research, and had reached that of certitude and complacency.

He rejected—you will not be surprised at that—he *scorned*, the doctrine of Atonement. “I will not receive life by the sacrifice of another. I will not have a pardon on the terms of the gospel. I will not go free while an innocent victim bears my penalty. It outrages my sense of justice that the guilt of the criminal should be laid on the innocent. It shocks me! I would sooner perish forever than go to heaven knowing that I had escaped my doom only by another having to bear my penalty.” So he rattled away for about the space of fifteen minutes, never for a moment doubting that he understood the whole matter. He congratulated himself upon his great elevation of character, and upon the glow of indignation he felt at the thought of an innocent substitute being sacrificed for his sin.

Nor would he hear a word from any one—certainly not from any one who had not been at the fountains of wisdom from which he himself had had such copious draughts. He would condescend to notice no suggestion, however rational or well-timed, but continued to pour forth his voluble repetitions

till he had conquered a—silence. The presence of a scholarly man of mature thought and great breadth of mind—a believer in Christ—gave him no pause.

If there were any injustice in the innocent suffering for the guilty—as no doubt there would be if it were enforced suffering—there is none when the sufferer *volunteers*. Sublime self-sacrifice there is in our Lord's death, but not injustice to him. "He gave himself." It was not an enforced subjection of him to my penalty. "No man taketh my life from me. I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." No one sees injustice in the suffering of the king who took the half of his son's penalty. It was a noble instance of parental self-sacrifice and administrative justice. Much more are all right-thinking minds impressed with the grandeur of that devotion of himself for the rescue of his guilty creatures which the Son of God manifested on the cross. "He loved us, and *gave himself* for us." If the Father "laid on him the iniquity of us all," it is no less true that he voluntarily assumed the burden. He bared his own back to the stripes laid on by the hand of justice.

But that one should live by the death of another—is that so strange a fact? That multitudes should live by the death of one—is that against nature? On the contrary, it is in exact accord with the facts of existence on every side of us. I challenge the skeptic upon the following proposition:

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT LIES FULLY
WITHIN THE ANALOGIES OF NATURE AS THEY APPEAR IN

VITAL PHENOMENA. It has its counterpart in nature. It is the same law operative in a different sphere. It is not exceptional, as to the aspect of it which we are now considering. It is not a violent departure from the methods of nature, but in full harmony with them.

I submit another postulate. It is this:

ALL LIFE IN THIS WORLD IS CONDITIONED UPON DEATH.

This is not a general proposition—it is a *universal* one. General propositions allow of exceptions; but this law is universal—there are no exceptions. What may be the fact in other worlds I do not pretend to know, for I know nothing of vital phenomena in other worlds. There may be a different order elsewhere, possibly—I cannot tell; there may be beautiful regions where there is no death—where life springs directly from the hand of God, without any such processes as we have to deal with here; but this I know, that in our world all life comes of death.

Whether this ignominious source of life, as it is a universal law, has any connection with sin or not, I shall not undertake to determine, to-day. For aught I know, man may have his being in a world tainted by him throughout. He is at the head of nature, and all nature *may*, for all I know to the contrary, be depraved through him. What concerns my argument now is that death is everywhere, in our world, the source of life. There are no exceptions—positively none—not even in the lowest forms of life. From the lowest forms of vegetative vitality to the highest type of animal existence, the law

holds. Evermore life springs out of death, and is supported by death.

“Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” This is the law of vegetable reproduction. The seed must decay—must suffer disorganization, and disappear. The minute germ-point starts into activity, and gets its first pabulum from the delicate starchy substance in which it is imbedded. This dies to make food for the new life. In the very act of dissolution it sends upward the tender embryo stalk, and starts downward the tiny fibrous rootlets. Life begins to work in the body of death; life is born of death. The “corn of wheat” must perish to give birth to the new life. So are the mysteries of life and death blended together; so closely are these antagonisms wedded.

I can imagine some celestial new-comer visiting the earth to study the constitution of terrestrial nature. He has discovered that the store of wheat in the granary, so sedulously guarded by the farmer, is the vital nourishment of the household. Still ignorant of vital processes, he sees the father take bushel after bushel of the precious wheat at seed-time, and scatter it broadcast upon the mellowed soil. “What!” he cries, “what is this? Are you stark mad? What perverse waste is this? You throw away your children’s food!” But the farmer knows. Ah! it is that the loved ones may have food again next year that he does this. He knows that the “corn of wheat” must die that there may be a new harvest. He commits the seed to the faithful bo-

som of mother earth, well knowing that from the fecundity of death she will yield him a generous increase.

Take a grain of wheat—lay it in your hand; you scarcely feel the weight of it. What is it? So much starch, so much gelatine, so much bran, and a dormant germ-point—that is all. What is the value of it? Lay it away in a dry place; protect it; preserve it from decay; you have just this minute quantity of starch, and gelatine, and bran, and the inactive germ-point—nothing more; it means that, and nothing more. But let it *die* in the soil, and you discover a potential life—a *potential life* that death makes *actual*; it takes a new significance, a new and higher value; it contains the prophecy of countless harvests; it stands for all the mysteries of *life*.

Nor is this less true of animal life. Death comes before life; life is still born of death. In incubation or in gestation, in the nest or in the matrix, the *ovum* must perish, that the new life may be. Nor in this higher sphere does life simply come of death; it is perpetually *sustained by it*.

I derided the affected exaltation of the young infidel, already mentioned, who was too pure and noble to live by the death of an innocent victim: "*You!* Who are you that scorn to live by the death of another? You have feasted on death ever since you were born. Harvests have been destroyed, by the acre, that you might live; nor harvests only. How many fishes of the river, how many birds of the air, how many beasts of the field, have perished that *you* might live? You gloat and fatten on death, every

day, and, with this luscious flesh between your teeth (for we were at the table), you affect an elevation that scorns to live by the death of the innocent! Was not this dead lamb, whose flesh you are now consuming, innocent? Shame upon your ridiculous pretension!" Such vain conceits are the staple of infidel sophistry.

I repeat it: *All life*—in this world, at least—*is conditioned upon death*; it originates in death; it feeds, and fattens, and grows, upon death. There is no life—absolutely none—that is not the product of death. The phosphorescent glow that is in your eye is kindled by the fuel that death supplies; the flush that is upon the cheek of beauty was elaborated from the chemistry of death; the dewy lip that thrills you with its kiss has been fashioned from the alembic of decay; the vigor of the athlete, the elastic tread of the healthy boy, the dexterous finger of the artist, are alike its handiwork. We may revolt at it—we may be disgusted with it; no difference. We return again, with whetted appetite, evermore, morning, noon, and night, to feed upon death. Our life roots itself in death; *it is conditioned upon death*.

But if life is conditioned upon death in the natural world, why should it not be in the spiritual, as well? If death, on the plane of animal existence, yields physical life, why may it not, on the higher plane of a divine humanity, give spiritual and immortal life? If the product of death may be appropriated to the uses of sustentation, by the grosser processes of deglutition and digestion in physical nature, why not by the nobler appropriation of faith in spiritual

being? If innocent brute-life must be sacrificed to save our bodies from perishing, is it irrational to suppose that the holy, incarnate Life might be sacrificed to save our souls from an eternal death?

LIFE BY DEATH—this is the Christian doctrine of Atonement; LIFE BY DEATH—this is the order of nature.

I repeat my postulate: *The Christian doctrine of Atonement lies fully within the analogies of nature, with respect to vital phenomena.* In the kingdom of nature, as in the kingdom of heaven, *life is conditioned upon death; therefore,* the Christian doctrine of Atonement is not only a dogma of religion, but also a suggestion of philosophy.

But the text contains the doctrine of Atonement, not in a general way, merely—life by the death of Christ—but it intimates the incalculable fecundity of that most wonderful death. The corn of wheat dying not only brings forth fruit, but *much fruit*. One incident of the law of vegetable reproduction is the amazing rapidity of increase that comes of it, and this suggests the overwhelming product to be harvested in the last day from the death of our blessed Redeemer.

Plant one corn of wheat in the best soil and under the most favorable conditions; gather the product, and plant it, the next year, in the best soil and under the most favorable conditions; so gather and plant, year after year. I have never made an accurate estimate, but I have no doubt that in *ten years* you would have wheat enough to plant every foot of arable land on the face of the earth; every continent

and every island might be seeded—so wonderful is the reproductive power of a corn of wheat.

It is more than eighteen centuries since Christ died. The Fact was planted in history. What reproductive power this Fact has had! It took vital effect in the minds and hearts of his disciples. They scattered the divine Fact over a vast area; they planted it in their generation and in the next. Received by faith, it took root in millions of souls, and reproduced itself; each generation planted it in the next; it often fell by the way-side, or on the rock, or among thorns, and yielded nothing; but there has never been wanting good ground, prepared by repentance and faith. There it has taken root, and the harvest of divine life has been perpetually renewed among men. Ever and anon new fields have been taken in and seeded. Within our century the area of cultivation has been enlarged with singular rapidity. Many regions of Asia, inaccessible hitherto, are starting into spiritual verdure, and constantly enlarging harvests of immortal life are gathered from this wonderful death. Every soul that receives it in faith becomes impregnated with a divine and vital righteousness, and renews the seed for other planting. Fathers plant it in the hearts of their children, teachers in the hearts of their pupils.

Within the last three hundred years the continent of America has been added to the field, and now, from this continent, other fields are entered in the distant Orient. *God, incarnate among us, suffering for us, going to the cross for us*—this is the Fact which,

appropriated by the soul in faith, yields a divine pabulum, and men become "partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." The love of God made manifest in the death of his Son! Surely this Fact has power enough to save. It does save, and reproduce itself in augmenting harvests of life and glory.

The spiritual husbandry increases still. Ages and generations to come will be yet more productive; and O what a harvest will be gathered in at last! How long the glorious process will go on no man can tell. The time of the end is hid from men and angels: it is nowhere revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

There is wide-spread expectation of its near approach. This view is insisted on chiefly by Millenarians; they expect Christ to come in his human form, and reign visibly on the earth a thousand years, before the general resurrection. Many who embrace this view are men of exalted character and men of learning. For *them* I have great respect; but I am profoundly convinced that the theory is both false and of pernicious tendency. I know the scriptures they rely upon, but unquestionably their exegesis is unsound.

This doctrine has reappeared in the Church at different times in past ages, always accompanied with the feverish expectation of the advent in the life-time of those who embrace it, and sometimes, no doubt, with a carnal view of the great honor they would have as the Lord's associates in the kingdom he would establish. When the predicted time passes,

and the Saviour does not come, the effect is most pernicious.

But this is incidental. I introduced it merely to say that I have a conviction that the end is not near. Of course I do not dogmatize on this point. The times and seasons are in God's hand. I have not the least idea *how long* the world will stand, but there are reasons why I think it is only in its infancy now. So far from being near its end, it is my opinion—and I claim for it no greater weight than is due to my opinion in the light of the reasons I give for it—that we are just now at the dawn of the era of Christian civilization, and the product of the seed-planting of Calvary has, up to this time, been but as the first handfuls of the great harvest.

I can give my reasons for this only in part in this Sermon.

It seems incredible to me that God would appropriate four thousand years to preparation for Christ's coming, and less than two thousand to his work after the advent, when redeeming agencies were at their maximum efficiency. This would be like making the preface more voluminous than the book, the portico more spacious than the house. I cannot but think that four thousand years devoted to clearing away rubbish intimates many thousand years of occupancy of the premises. It is not God's method to make great parade for small effect, but exactly the reverse. The effect is great, the means and machinery bearing small proportion to it. The great display of history and prophecy, of type and

symbol, which for so long a period preindicate the coming of the Lord and his work on earth, are significant of a grand period of saving *work* after it should be fairly inaugurated.

Who can believe that the Christian civilization has culminated in the present condition of the world?

I do not take a sinister or despairing view of the state of society now existing. I have no sympathy with those who croak about the increasing degeneracy of the human race. There is not a word of it true. The world is better to-day than it ever was before—more enlightened and less corrupt. I know it is customary with many to say that our late war was marked by greater atrocities than any war of former times, and that the public corruption which has succeeded it is beyond all precedent. Brethren, those who talk thus betray a great ignorance of the history of wars, and of the state of society that always follows great civil wars. The war was cruel enough, no doubt, as war, and especially civil war, must always be; it is, in its nature, a savage thing; it is a question, largely, of brute force; in its very nature, it fosters all the low and malignant passions; but our late war had nothing like the diabolical character common in wars of former times. History is full of instances of besieged cities, when they were entered, being given up to pillage. The burning of Columbia was awful, and will remain forever a blot on American history; but the soldiers were not allowed, by official order, to take possession of the women of the captured city. Go no farther

back than the havoc made by the Duke of Alva in the Netherlands, and you will learn that within the era of the Reformation Christianity has done much to ameliorate even the horrors of war.

There has been advancement in the character and condition of civilized nations from the dawn of history till this time. There may have been moments of retrogression and ages of stagnation, but upon the whole, and in the long run, the advancement has been steady, and in the comparison of distant periods it will be seen to be very great. The old Greek civilization took its rise from that which preceded it in Egypt, and was a decided improvement upon it; the Roman civilization supervened upon the Greek, and on the utilitarian side, though not on the esthetic, was an improvement upon that; modern civilization in Europe and America is the outgrowth of the Roman, with Christianity added as the most important factor; and, beyond all question and all comparison, the modern Christian civilization is the highest of all in every particular that goes to make up the fact of civilization. Its morality is purer, and almost infinitely more delicate; its culture is more generally diffused, and broader; labor is better paid; the poorer classes are better housed, better clothed, better fed, better educated. There was never any thing like it in all the past.

This advancement has taken place mainly within the last three or four hundred years. That Christianity did not sooner affect the prevailing civilization is not a surprising fact. At first came its

struggle with civilized paganism, for the mastery. In this struggle it was only half successful. It ascended the throne, indeed, and established itself, in name, in the popular belief; but before it did this it became, itself, deeply tainted with pagan ideas and customs. In the Roman Church, to this day, this half-paganized condition continues. Next came the invasion and conquest of Christian Europe by the Northern barbarians; they conquered the Christian nations, but the Church conquered them; though, during the long-continued turmoil, the leaven of Christian ideas was neutralized by the struggle; the "Dark Ages" were an inevitable consequence of this.

Yet the two great redeeming facts were preserved in the Church—the Incarnation and sacrificial Death. These two facts made an open way, in human thought, for the entrance of the love of God, with all its ameliorating and civilizing influences.

Luther did not *make* the Reformation; he was only its instrument. The Reformation began before he was born; it was from God—the product of the Incarnation and Atonement. Given Christ in history, and the effect was inevitable. The struggle and agony, in the contest with all-prevalent evil, might be protracted, but the beneficent power must triumph in the end. It was a grand result to gain the mastery over the barbarians; that achievement was the prophecy of all that followed. The corn of wheat that died on Calvary had amazing powers of reproduction to live in such a soil, and to preserve its own seed from age to age, for more auspicious times; there was a divine vitality in it. No sooner

had the affairs of Europe assumed a somewhat stable condition than the influence of Christ began to be more distinctly felt—working silently at first, and unperceived, yet *working* with a diffused and godlike energy. The “Dark Ages” could not last forever, with the Sun of righteousness in the sky. How long the fogs and mists rising from the heats of universal war might cloud his face none could know; but his rays have energy sufficient to dispel all mists, however dense. It is only a question of time. The blaze of the sun will clear the atmosphere at last, and flood the earth with radiance.

So the *renaissance* came; the dim, round disc of the sun appears through the rising vapors. If men only knew it, the Reformation is assured in the *renaissance*. Luther was a product of the *renaissance*, and the instrument of the Reformation. God gave him *at the right time*. If he had lived at the time of Huss or Wiclif, he could have done no more than they; but the quickening had begun. The world was ready for Luther, and Luther himself was only the fullest, ripest ear of the more vigorous harvests now beginning to come in from a soil better prepared; but all, all, is from the planting of that blessed corn of wheat.

From that day the advance has been at once rapid and steady. But I cannot dwell. The theme is opulent, but time fails. In every element of civilization, except it may be in the fine arts, the Europe and America of to-day are, beyond comparison, elevated above all former times; indeed, the fine arts are more widely diffused. Some of the old masters

have never, perhaps, been excelled; but the products of genius were never so generally enjoyed. The advance is in increasing ratio. No century has ever gone forward with such strides as *this*.

But we have not yet seen the possibilities of Christian civilization. The Bible is a depository of seed-thoughts, and these have been scattered broadcast since the middle of the sixteenth century. The harvest has been constantly increasing, and is so still.

Depend upon it, the results of Christian thought are not at the maximum yet. Science has not completed its discoveries; invention has not done its best; the useful arts are yet in a crude state; the problem of the relation of labor and capital is to have a better solution; morals are not at the highest practicable standard; religion is not dominant among men, as it may and must be. The time of the end is not yet. Christianity has scarcely yet had fair play in the world.

The time of the end is not yet. The civilizing forces of Christianity must have opportunity. Centuries are not sufficient. It must have better range and sweep; it must have tens of thousands of years—ay, hundreds of thousands, for aught I know; it must have its millennium. Who shall say that the thousand years of the Apocalypse is just one thousand years? It would not be in the line of prophetic precedent that it should be so. Is it not, rather, a definite put for an indefinite time? If so, it must be a very long time; for round numbers, if they are large, stand indefinitely for numbers much larger than the literal statement; or, if we take it on an-

other principle of prophetic interpretation of time—a day for a year—it swells the sum to hundreds of thousands. But these times and seasons are with the Father; we cannot know with certainty. I have only the general conviction that, as I have already said, the earth is yet but in its infancy, and the Christian civilization has, up to this time, given but some intimation of the glorious achievements of the future.

The time will never come when every man shall be truly converted; but we may believe that in its best estate the Church will gather in the great masses of men, and bring them to the actual knowledge of God. Then the highest measures of intelligence will preside over every department of industry; labor will be provided with all possible appliances to multiply the results of exertion; and, in domestic life, every convenience will be secured, as well as the best hygienic conditions; temperance and virtue will prevail; scientific agriculture will bring every acre to its highest productive capacity; frugality and industry will make the most of every harvest. Under such conditions the earth will become populous beyond any thing we have ever imagined; every quarter of an acre, perhaps, will support its family. Then shall the crowded earth and the overflowing Church, for tens of thousands of years, go on to swell the company of the redeemed; the pathway to the skies will be thronged through all those ages.

Then, indeed, will the vision of Patmos be accomplished. There will be a great multitude in heaven

which no man could number. What a harvest of immortality! and all from the one corn of wheat that fell into the ground and died. What reproductive power is here! "It bringeth forth much fruit."

There is one passage in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah that thrills me more deeply than I can express. It gives a sublimer view of the work of Christ, perhaps, than any other single statement. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." *Christ's own gratified contemplation of the fruit of his death!*

If, indeed, for so many ages, the earth, watered by the blood of the Lamb, is to yield her harvests of souls, what a meaning this declaration has! The celestial area around the throne of the Redeemer, for spaces wider than an angel's vision can sweep, will be crowded with the purchase of his blood. He shall see them recovered from hell, made holy, made immortal, by his pain, the travail of his soul. Then, free of the universe, with such powers of knowledge and achievement as we cannot imagine, he shall see them swarm out through all the breadths of space, exploring all worlds, and achieving a destiny worthy of the creative purpose of God—worthy of the vast expenditure of Redemption. Ah! he shall be satisfied—he *shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.*

ALL THIS IS THE PRODUCT OF HIS DEATH.

Now we can understand the reason of the terms in which our Lord spoke of his own death—the *Son of man shall be glorified*. Heaven is made populous

by the fruit of his suffering! The corn of wheat, dying, springs into the glory of the new life, the waving verdure of the fields, and the fullness of the ripe harvest. From His death life and immortality spring up, and created being reaches and realizes the consummation of its divinest destinies.

The glory appears not in countless numbers only, but in the grandeur of individual destiny. "It doth not yet appear *what* we shall be [mark the words, *WHAT we shall be*]; but we know that, when he shall appear, WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM; for we shall see him as he is." Personal being so great, in multitudes so countless—all the outgrowth of the Atonement, the fruit of His death. Yea, verily, was he glorified in dying. Death, the crowning dishonor of a depraved existence, is the crowning glory of the redeeming Lord; for in him it is the sacrament of life. He looks back even upon Calvary, AND IS SATISFIED.

When I was a mere child, in a new region of country in the West, there was a backward spring, from late frosts, followed by a killing frost early in the fall. The Indian corn, almost the only cereal then produced on the frontier, was much of it immature, and it was thought doubtful if the ripest had not been so injured as to be unfit for seed. It was a time of anxiety among the settlers. There were no facilities for transportation, so that it would be difficult and costly to bring seed from a distance.

In the spring succeeding, my father prepared his choicest field for planting, with great care. Plow and harrow had done their work, and done it well. Then came the question of *seed*. He entered the

old fashioned log crib to select the soundest ears. The corn had stood long in the field to become fully dry, and had then been housed without husking. In storing it he had put the best in a certain place.

Child-like, I followed him into the crib. Half the corn had been fed away, and the pile of unhusked ears lay in a bank with a face that was almost perpendicular. Father began at the spot where the best of the corn had been placed. I remember now how he stripped the husk from the ear and removed a few grains, breaking them and examining the "heart"—the germ-point. If the fresh aspect of vitality was wanting it was thrown aside. So, many ears were examined, condemned, and thrown aside, and the sound ones shelled for seed. In imitative effort, I, too, tugged at the husk and stripped an ear, and broke the grain and examined the "heart," not knowing what it was. I remember how the pile of loose-lying husks grew, and a cavernous opening appeared in the perpendicular face of the bank, as the work went on. I remember, too, another thing, as if it were yesterday: the anxious face of my mother appeared at the little crib-door. As I gaze upon it now, through the recollections of forty-five years, it looks like the face of an angel, only the glow and glory seem touched with a shade of sadness. "Wells," she said, calling him by his Christian name, "can you get seed?"

Little did I comprehend it then; but it was a question of bread for her children, the question of questions for a mother's heart. "Can you get *seed*?"

Upon this great human harvest there came an early frost—the blight of sin. The inward life felt the deadly touch; the reproductive power of holiness was destroyed; God's planting seemed to fail, and desolation was on every field; hope died; life withered; despair reigned; death lorded it over all.

But, blessed be God! *HE provided one sound ear of human corn for seed*, and in it was the *all-vital germ*, THE DIVINITY, with reproductive efficacy for all the ages. Planted in faith, it fructifies the dormant spirit, and the blighted harvest is redeemed.

One sound ear of human corn! Yes. Begotten of God, and born of the Virgin, He escaped the frost-touch that was upon all other hearts. In him alone humanity escaped. Even in the judgment of candid infidels he is the matchless Man. Goodness is consummated in him; from the manger to the cross there is not one stain. Even the sun has spots, but the face of this Sun of righteousness is luminous at every point. The labors and sufferings of humanity appear in him, but no human weaknesses of character. The most conspicuous object of human history, that which has been the most thoroughly analyzed, the most mercilessly criticised, there he still stands without spot or blemish—the only spotless thing in human history—the one sound ear of human corn. Then there was in him the germ of divinity. “God was manifest in the flesh.” “In him was life,” not for himself only, but the seed-life that was to impregnate dead souls, to restore the blighted spiritual harvest of the earth, and to replenish the defrauded granaries of heaven.

II. THE TEXT CONTAINS THE DOCTRINE OF SELF-ABNEGATION.

This is evident from its vital connection with the succeeding verse: "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."

The death of Christ, taken by itself, does not and cannot save the soul. There must be somewhat in the experience of every man, answering to the sacrifice of himself by our Lord, before his death can take effect in personal character. I speak this of those to whom the gospel comes. How God deals with those to whom, for want of intelligence or of opportunity, the gospel never comes, I do not know. The Bible is not explicit on that point, nor are we concerned to know. But his method with us, to whom the offer of life in Christ is made, is distinctly revealed. It is with this that we have to do, and on this point there is nothing obscure in the sacred text; there is no room for equivocation or evasion: the death of Christ must be responded to by an inward sense of death in ourselves.

• The law of self-abnegation is asserted over and over again, in the Gospels and in the Epistles—by our Lord and by the inspired apostles.

In our depraved condition consciousness culminates in the carnal side of our nature; *life* is realized in the flesh. This is what the apostle calls the "old man"—the Adam—the fallen nature which we inherit from the first man. The true life, the spirit-life, is in paralysis; it is dormant—it is dead. "We are carnal, sold under sin." The carnal con-

sciousness has destroyed the spiritual. How vital it is! Self-consciousness is concentrated in it; and how intense it is! Its destruction is *death*. This is no exaggerated statement; but this dominancy of the flesh, this culmination of consciousness in carnality, cannot consist with a saved condition. Through the carnal life the world rules us, and God is dethroned. It is through a vital condition of the spiritual nature that God reigns in us. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh." These two "are contrary the one to the other." "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

In the process of salvation, before the "new man" can be raised up in us, the "old man must die," he must "be crucified with his deeds." Depend on this: the conversion of the soul is no mere incident, no mere by-play, of a man's life. The evil self must go to the cross with Christ, vital as it is; the body must be put down, and "kept under;" in a deep and radical repentance the old man must be brought to his death.

How serious this work of self-abnegation is will appear from many passages in the Epistles. "The old man is crucified, with the affections and lusts." "I am crucified with Christ." "Ye are dead." Ah! how complete was the self-immolation of this man, Paul! He made no compromise with the world; he gave up all! Not less searching are the words of St. John: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any

man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." The man who lives for the world does not live for God. But O is it not like giving up life itself for the ungodly man to give up the world? How life culminates in pride, in the love of money, in fleshly appetites, all that goes to make up the enjoyment of this world! But "he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." The law is inexorable: like produces like; eternal life can never come from this fleshly life; only corruption can come of the flesh; we must die to this world before we can live to God and live forever. The "corn of wheat must die" in us, in our life as it is related to this world, before it can bring forth the spiritual harvest. We must "hate our life in this world." Subjectively, in us, also, life is conditioned upon death. "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." I am dead, but "nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." The Christ-life germinates when the flesh-life perishes.

But this death of the carnal nature is not to be understood in any ascetic sense. The carnal life cannot be starved out by fastings, nor destroyed by vigils. "Keeping the body under" does not mean that. It is an experience that comports with full bodily vigor and the temperate enjoyment of all that God has given us, according to his law; it is simply the subjection, the continued subjection, of the body, and of all that appertains to our life in

this world, to the will of God; it is making the "body a living sacrifice to God;" it is not destroying any physical function, but enthroning God over all in our wills—giving up our will to his in all things. To be dead to the world—dead in the apostle's meaning—is to be in such a temper as will "take joyfully the spoiling of goods" and "gladly suffer the loss of all things" for Christ's sake; such a temper as will take privation and shame, and even death, willingly, if these come as incidents of the service of God. It is to be in such a spirit as that any enjoyment, any indulgence, that is contrary to God's will, will be not reluctantly, but cheerfully, given up.

The deliverances of our Lord himself upon this point are very strong: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." *Deny himself!* how deeply Christ asserts himself upon us! The *self* must sink in his presence. Even domestic ties are to be held subject to his will. There must be no competition with him, even in the love of father or mother, brother or sister, husband or wife, or child—to say nothing of houses or lands. Upon his demand all tenderest and most sacred ties are to be relinquished. He that loveth "even his own life more than me is not worthy of me." The right hand, or foot, offending is to be cut off—the right eye even plucked out. There can be no doubt self-abnegation is the law of recovery from evil to good, from sin to holiness. The law is inexorable—it is in the very nature of the case: the depraved life must perish that the

holy life may take place. There are no exempt cases—there can be none; the corn of wheat must die.

St. Paul represents this twofold death—the death of Christ for us and our death to a life of sin in coming into him—by another metaphor: the process of grafting. The good olive-tree is that spiritual body of which Christ is the life. Into this good olive-tree the branches of the wild are ingrafted by faith. Though this metaphor was used by the apostle for another purpose, yet it covers this ground exactly.

In the process of grafting, vital sources are laid bare on both sides. The knife must penetrate the stock and open the sources of life in it. Upon the branch that is to be grafted into it, the work of the knife, the unmerciful knife, must also be done; it must be severed from the parent stock; it must be henceforth dead to all former sources of life. Vital sources must be laid bare in it—no surface-work will do; the life must be reached. Then the severed branch is inserted into the pierced stock, and just where the exposed life-point in the stock touches the exposed life-point in the graft, the life passes from the one into the other, and henceforth the graft lives from the life of the stock into which it is set.

The work of repentance *must* be done; the old life of sin *must perish*; we *must* be severed from the life we have lived in the flesh before we can live the life of faith in the Son of God.

Christ has suffered for us all; the divine stock

stands pierced and ready. Infinite sources of life are exposed and made accessible to us; yet we may abide in the wild olive-tree and perish. The death of Christ alone will not save; there must be, also, the death in us; we must pass out of ourselves into him. Then, just where the bleeding heart, severed from the world, touches the bleeding side of Christ, the sources of life opened there flow in upon the soul, and quicken it into immortality; the God-life comes in all the fullness of its purity and power, and we are—O wondrous words!—we are “*made partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*”

Let no man imagine that because Christ died for him he will, therefore, inevitably be saved. God respects the great fact of human freedom in the work of salvation, as in every other respect where personal character is concerned. The Atonement has so far secured for us the quickening grace of the Spirit as to elevate our moral nature above the mere helplessness of a depraved state, so that our will comes into play. *Beyond that* the responsibility is with us. God does not force; he only calls us, and gives sufficient quickening to enable us to hear and heed the call; he respects the essential freedom of man in us, as in Adam. *He* was at liberty to relate himself to the divine government, under the law, according to his own choice; he could take the attitude of the child or the rebel; the whole matter was with him. So *we* have our choice; we can relate ourselves to the divine government, under grace, *at will*; we have it in our power to take any attitude toward Christ;

we can accept him, we can reject him. He is on the cross, bearing the sin of the world. But each individual relates himself to Christ *freely*. He offers to cover me with his vicarious merit; he is there, ready with his almighty protection. The bolt of justice is delivered against me; it is hurled forward with a momentum that is omnipotent; it moves with a force sufficient to unseat the sun from his place, sufficient to disorganize the solar system, sufficient to demolish the universe; but I have taken shelter under Christ. By repentance and faith I hold him in range between the Infinite Justice and me. The blow falls on him; I am safe; I never feel it; I am not aware of it. I live in him.

But if I shall, by impenitency and unbelief, put Christ aside, and stand for myself before the descending stroke, I must take it in its immeasurable force upon my own head. I am self-doomed; for the shield of Almighty Love was there for a refuge.

The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is in the world, and fills it and embraces it, like the atmosphere. Faith opens the soul to it; impenitency and unbelief close it. Into the open soul it enters, and breathes into it the breath of eternal life; but it never forces a closed door; impenitency shuts it out, and dies.

“He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

The Lord's Supper.

SERMON VIII.

"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." 1 Cor. xi. 26.

IT is almost impossible for us, enlightened as we are upon all questions of Christian morality, to see how it could be that any Church should have come to celebrate the sacramental Supper in a sort of drunken carousal; yet such was the fact in the Church at Corinth.

But when we recollect that the members of the Corinthian Church were recent converts from heathenism, the matter may be explained. The heathen, even the most enlightened of them, had never connected religion and morals. Their priests were not teachers of morals; the philosophers taught morals; the priests instructed the people in auguries and in the various methods of propitiating the gods. Indeed, their religion stood in the way of any sound moral instruction; for many of the gods were themselves most impure. They originated in a depraved

imagination, and were, of course, very bad specimens of moral character; they were to be propitiated by impure rites, and the grossest vices in their worshippers must have been supposed to be looked upon with complacency by them.

It was but natural that when they changed their religion these traditional ideas should be eradicated slowly and with difficulty. Shocking as it is that the wine that represents the blood of our blessed Lord should have been used in a drunken revel, yet it was inevitable, perhaps, that those who had been so lately, and for their whole lives, accustomed to religious celebrations of this kind, should fall into just that most grievous sin. They would confound this solemn Christian feast with the festivals of Bacchus and other profligate gods, that both they and their fathers had worshiped from immemorial times; they would be slow to comprehend the immaculate character of our Saviour, and how repugnant to it must be any immorality in the rites of his Church! Equally slow would they be to comprehend the necessary relation between religion and morality in the Christian system. The inevitable logic of the Christian doctrine would be embarrassed in their thought by the mental habitudes of a life-time. Preconceived and settled ideas are dislodged slowly and with great difficulty. It was impossible to make the disciples understand that the kingdom of Christ was not a civil government. This law of conservatism, in the human mind—this tenacity of established ideas—serves a valuable purpose in society; but it was a barrier in the way of the gospel at first; it hindered the

reception of Christian ideas in their full significance and purity.

A new Church, organized among the rudest and wickedest populations of our frontier settlements, is brought to godly discipline with comparative ease, because the converts understand, and have always understood, that the man who embraces Christ is expected to lead a pure life. Religion and moral purity are correlative in all their thinking. Not so in a Church of newly-converted heathen in the apostle's day; they had been accustomed to be, at the same time, very devout and very licentious. To reduce the Gentile Churches to proper discipline was, therefore, a great labor, and it devolved chiefly upon St. Paul.

In this eleventh chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians the apostle corrects the dreadful corruptions which he had heard of as having appeared in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, at Corinth. The terms of instruction and rebuke in which he writes are commensurate with the gravity of the abuse. The bread and wine set apart as memorials of the body and blood of the Lord they had prostituted to purposes of sensual pleasure. It was an awful perversion of holy things; it was sacrilege! The apostle measures his words by the degree of turpitude he has to deal with: "Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." These are

fearful words. The effect must have been profound, and we may well believe that our Saviour was never so dishonored by his own ordinance again.

I have known persons of sensitive conscience and a timid nature to refrain from the holy Supper for years, under the influence of these dreadful communications. To run the risk of being "guilty of the body and blood of the Lord," and of "eating and drinking damnation to themselves," fills them with terror. And are not these the dreadful consequences of eating and drinking unworthily? and have not they a deep sense of being unworthy? How, then, can they take this bread and wine? They feel that it would be to provoke their own eternal doom.

To such let me say, You are in no possible danger of incurring the dreadful guilt so strongly denounced by the apostle, for two reasons: First, it is not the *unworthy character of the communicant* that the apostle refers to, but the *unworthy manner of communicating*; it is not those who feel unworthy, nor those who *are* unworthy, but those who eat and drink *unworthily*—that is, in an unworthy manner—who are condemned. Indeed, the very particular in which the unworthy manner of communicating consisted is particularly indicated. They did not, in the act of eating and drinking, *discern the Lord's body*; they ate and drank, not in memory of "his most precious death," but for sensual gratification. It was a profane perversion of the solemn feast of our Saviour's death.* They made themselves merry under the

* Dr. Summers and other learned expositors are of opinion that the solemn forms of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper

shadow of the cross, and in sight of his mangled body; they trifled with the awful mystery of the divine agony, in the very rite instituted to commemorate it; they ate, not discerning the Lord's body, not for the purpose of showing his death, not even thinking of it; but for pleasure only. No one, however unworthy, that eats with a view to commemorate the Crucifixion can be guilty of this sin. In the second place, there is no temptation to commit the sin which these passages condemn, in our present manner of observing this ordinance. Only a very small fragment of bread and one sup of wine can never so appeal to the palate as to lead to a sensual observance, and there is no place allowed for connecting convivial pleasures with the rite.

Observe, it is not the feeling or fact of personal unworthiness in you that occasions the guilt, and you are in no danger of the convivial abuse of the occasion. Dismiss your fears, and come and confess your dying Lord at his own table. Unworthy! Yes, I know you are; so am I; and who is not? Come, let us "make our humble confession to Almighty God, meekly kneeling upon our knees."

In our great Master's name, I admonish you this day. There is greater danger in refusing to communicate than in communicating. Come, and, in a new consecration of yourself to him, and in deep

were observed at the close of the *Agape*, or Feast of Love, and that it was *that feast* which was prostituted to convivial purposes. But this does not affect the doctrine of the Sermon; for the two were so closely related that the Supper would come at the height of the disorder.

humility, confess him in the broken bread. To refuse is, tacitly, to "deny him before men."

With a view to an intelligent and profitable participation of the sacred feast, let us consider the import of the suggestive words of the text.

This institution has both a retrospective and a prospective significance—a backward and a forward look. It recalls the most important event of the past, and contemplates a no less important event of the future. As it is retrospective, it calls to mind the humiliation and death of Christ; as it is prospective, it assures us of his triumphant second coming in glorious majesty, to judge the quick and dead. It suggests at once a memory and an anticipation; it gives equal inspiration to faith and hope. "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death TILL HE COME."

Let us, then, examine it in both these aspects. I call attention, then—

I. TO THE RETROSPECTIVE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

1. As this institution is retrospective, it is in the nature of a monument. There are monumental customs as well as monumental buildings. A custom that originates from a fact, and avowedly stands for the fact, and conserves it, has this character; it is a monument of the fact it conserves.

There is no better proof of the truth of a fact than a custom originating from it and traced back by indubitable history to the very date of the fact itself. "Leslie's Short Method with Deists," a book

now, I believe, out of print, treats of this point very thoroughly. A fiction has not the force, nor can it gain the credit at the time, to originate a custom.

There is no fact more clearly ascertained by authentic history than that of the observance of this Supper up to the very year of the Crucifixion. But there is no occasion, really, to attempt the proof of the death of Jesus of Nazareth; the most inveterate skepticism does not question it. The fact of his resurrection is called in question, but not the fact of his death; but it is of no less consequence to us that he rose from the dead than that he died. In fact, the whole truth of revealed religion hinges on the fact of his resurrection. Of course it does not fall in with the purposes of this Sermon to undertake to prove this most vital fact.

But it is pertinent to say that this monument of his death goes far to establish the fact, also, that he rose again. His death could never have acquired such value with his acquaintances as to be commemorated among them by a formal institution, if it had not been followed by his coming up again from the grave. That they should hold his death in such regard upon any other hypothesis is incredible; and if he did not rise, his immediate acquaintances *knew it*. But it was precisely among them that this custom originated. In the light of the Resurrection his death acquired a divine significance and value, and the memory of it was therefore kept alive, most naturally, in the manner he had himself directed.

The death of no other man is perpetuated in

memory by such a monument. The mortuary history of our race finds no other instance of a death that has such moral force as to embody itself and reassert itself in any such way. The fact is exceptional and solitary. No instance of mere mortality has ever had such a hold on men, or ever can. After the lapse of more than eighteen centuries a large proportion of the human family are in tears in the presence of this monument. What a magnetism there must be in the fact it represents! I submit that, upon the hypothesis that he was a mere man who was crucified at Jerusalem, under the administration of Pontius Pilate, this perpetual interest in his death is unaccountable.

As to his birth and social *status*, he was an obscure man. In the line of statesmanship and war, the employments in which men usually become historical, he did nothing. In one view of them his teachings may be considered a philosophy; but in the field of philosophy men do not acquire such hold upon their fellows. It is impossible to imagine men all over the world, the low and the high, the rich and the poor, the ignorant and the learned, meeting, ever, at short intervals, to celebrate the death of Plato. The only hold Jesus of Nazareth has upon men is in a character wholly different from that of a statesman, a military chieftain, or a philosopher. It is differentiated, also, no less from the influence of Buddha or Confucius. It is deeper than either; it is more vital. Moreover, it is an influence arising mainly out of his *death*. This is a capital difference. It calls men together to com-

memorate his sufferings. It is an influence most felt in the progressive and robust civilization of Europe and America. It is aggressive now, after all this lapse of years. It is making fresh conquests now, in remotest regions.

The name of Christ occupies larger space in human thought at this moment than it ever did before. More books have been written about him, friendly or adverse, within the last ten or fifteen years than ever in the same length of time; more men are spreading his name in regions where he was never known than ever before. Men cannot keep quiet in respect to his claims; they cannot be indifferent; no man takes a neutral attitude. He is felt everywhere. There are still enemies who wage the hopeless warfare upon his cause. In the last century he was assailed in the field of literature and philosophy. In this the attack is from men affecting scientific distinction. But above all the din of the conflict is heard the augmenting volume of the songs and shouts of his ever-increasing multitudes of worshipers.

The fulfillment of the prophecy hastens: "To him every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." Even those who hate him render a reluctant homage. He has taken possession of chronology. An atheist cannot write a letter, nor sign a bill of lading, nor a contract, nor a title-deed, that he does not date it *Anno Domini*—in the year of our Lord. And as Christian commerce dominates more and more the business of the world, this will be more and more widely felt.

The monumental custom is in some respects a more imposing structure than the monumental pile. Of this custom it is eminently true. The most solid masonry yields, however slowly, to the abrading influences of time. Even the Pyramids begin to suffer. Both the configuration and material of those wonderful structures were such as best to resist decay; but all in vain. The granite surfaces are beginning to feel the tooth of the destroyer, and upon some the fatal hand of the iconoclast antiquary has been laid. It is only a question of time. Like all other works of man, they are doomed. But this Christian monument stands majestic in immortality; its base covers a broader area year by year. In recent times it has been extended over the continent of America from one ocean to the other. Still later the foundations have been laid in Australia and India. Within our own day it has come to rest on Madagascar and the South Sea Islands. It still widens in China and Japan. Century after century adds round on round to the ascending summit, and now, as we gaze upon the vast column, it bathes its head in perpetual light. On it, indeed, "the sun never sets." It is in the eye of all nations. Millions on millions perpetually gaze upon it with mingled awe and love.

It is no gorgeous or sensuous display of imposing ceremonial that perpetuates it. In all evangelical Churches the rite is simple and unostentatious to the last degree. The followers of Christ meet and eat bread and drink wine. It is not the form, but the spirit, that preserves it; it is the fact which it

conserves that gives it immortality. In it Infinite Goodness whispers its love into our hearts.

2. *This institution has a symbolical import.*

There is that in a symbol which corresponds, in some particular, to the truth it represents, so that it gives a natural expression to the truth.

As a symbol, the Lord's Supper represents both the fact and design of our Saviour's death. He died to give life to man. We have here the doctrine of Atonement represented in a sensible form.

Bread is taken to represent the body of Christ. Why bread, rather than some other substance? Because bread is the substance chiefly used for human subsistence. More than any other, it is the pabulum of our life. "I give my body for the life of the world." "My flesh is meat indeed." "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." "In him was life." "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." "A body hast thou prepared me." "I am that bread of life." "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."

In these passages bread is associated with the body of Christ for the reason already mentioned. Men live by bread, as to their physical nature—they

live by the body of Christ, as to their spiritual nature. He uses bread in his own teaching of the doctrine of Atonement, metaphorically; he also uses it as a symbol in the institution by which he represents this doctrine in a sensible form.

But bread, in order to become pabulum, must be *broken*. Violence must be done to it; the corn must first be trituated between the upper and the nether millstones; the flour must be kneaded; the loaf must be broken, and reduced by manducation and digestion, before there can be assimilation. So the body of Jesus suffered violence; it was broken. The hands and feet were nailed; the side was pierced. He yielded himself, helpless, into the hands of his murderers.

Wine also enters into this ordinance as an element. Why should wine be used in it? Is that, also, a significant part of the symbol? Is it not most strikingly so? It is "wine which cheereth God and man," in the language of Jotham; it is wine that you give to the faint, and to the dying, to revive them. And is not man faint? full of wounds and bruises? Is he not dying? What shall revive him but the blood? "The blood is the life." "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." "My blood is drink indeed." "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him." This blood is the wine of God, by which he restores the perishing. It restores them that are at the gate of death; it infuses new life into the dead soul.

In the Supper the wine is *poured out*. So the blood was poured out. From many wounds it streamed forth: from the thorn-points upon his brow, from the stripes upon his naked flesh, from his hands and feet, and from his pierced side, the life-stream flowed—nay, blood came, as if it had been sweat, in great drops that covered his body, in the garden.

So this symbolical institution brings the agony of Christ, in the most suggestive and touching manner, into our very sight. It is intended to make the fact *real* to our hearts. We stand in the garden, and see the prostrate Victim upon the earth, in that dread night of anguish; we hear his voice: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." The three disciples sleep; he has no human sympathy; but an angel comes and strengthens him. We see the mob coming, with staves and lanterns, led by Judas; we see the treacherous kiss. Through all the later hours of the night he is in the hall of the high-priest's palace. Of the disciples, only John and Peter are with him, and Peter denies him in his presence. It is the hour of "the power of darkness." The coarse servants of the high-priest abuse him in brutal sport; they blindfold him, and smite him on the cheek, heavy blows, with the open palm, and tauntingly demand of him, "Who smote thee?" The covering is removed, and he is buffeted; blow on blow, from hard, heavy fists, is delivered on his sacred face. When the morning dawned, how bruised and swollen it must have ap-

peared! Behold him, the following day, in the hands of a besotted multitude, tried before the governor, condemned, his back laid bare and scourged, every stroke of the cruel lash bringing blood! Behold him, crowned with thorns, the points inward, piercing his brow! Behold him clothed with purple and derided with mock homage! He is hurried up and down the street, a spectacle of degradation. See that face, bruised by the buffeting of the night, and streams of blood from the points of the thorns trickling over it in red stripes! Ah! if you had seen him then, you would have known what the prophet meant: "His face was so marred more than any man, and his countenance more than the sons of men."

His hands are bound with cords, the back of them against the wood of the cross; the point of the nail is set against the palm; the heavy hammer falls; the blunt point breaks through, and the ragged edges tear their way, inch by inch, under repeated strokes; the cross is set up, and the full weight of his body is upon the nails. O the agony! He cries, "I thirst!" and they give him vinegar, mingled with gall; he hangs between two thieves.

What horror is this? Darkness blacker than midnight covers the earth; the sun is gone out. What a shock! There is an earthquake that rives the granite masses of the mountains; the veil of the temple is rent from the top to the bottom. •

The mob and the soldiers have possession of him; the disciples have fled; even John and his mother are thrust back by the malignant throng who gloat over his helpless agony, and mock him: "If thou be

the Son of God, come down from the cross;" "he saved others, himself he cannot save." He could have summoned twelve legions of puissant angels; but little did they believe it. His hour is come; the cup may not pass; he must drink the dregs; he must tread the wine-press of the wrath of God alone; of the people there is none to help him; even celestial sympathy fails—the last angel that came to comfort him has fled. There is no aid in earth or heaven for him; only the sympathy of the Father still supports him.

But what new, unutterable throes are these? Even now he seems startled, as if some unlooked-for horror had overtaken him. Abandoned by angels and good men, and in possession of his tormentors—he could bear all that; the sun itself, in the heavens, refuses his light—he could bear that; but hear that cry! It is as if all the agonies of eternity had found voice: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The mystery of that dread moment no man can penetrate. What passed between the Father and the Son I dare not conjecture; yet we can understand nothing less than that the Son was remitted to the penalty he had assumed. The sins of the whole world were accumulated upon him, and the vicarious agony culminated in that sense of being forsaken by the Father. The Father "gave him up for us all"—gave him up to have personal sense of that word, "Depart," in which the utmost soul-death is realized.

"I believe that he suffered under Pontius Pilate." The neophyte at the altars of the Church has recited

this in his "*Credo*" for immemorial ages. "He suffered for me"—the sin-stricken soul has found pardon and healing in it. "He suffered"—it has been the consolation of dying millions; and now, to-day, the bread broken and the wine poured out, with silent, symbolic pathos, repeat to our hearts, "He suffered." We feel ourselves standing by the cross; we see the countenance, marred more than the sons of men; we see him under the insupportable burden of our sins; we feel as if, after such a sight, we could never, never sin again; we fall prostrate, overwhelmed with self-accusing grief, to realize the reassuring rapture of a quickened faith, and exclaim, "He suffered! he suffered!"

But we have not yet exhausted the symbolical significance of the Supper. We have seen that bread and wine are the basis of this sacrament, representing the life-giving power of the body and blood of Christ; we have seen, also, that the bread is broken, to represent the fact that violence was done to our Lord's body in order that we might live by it, and the wine poured out to represent the shedding of his blood for our salvation. But before bread can become nutriment it must be *eaten*, and wine can never revive the dying till they drink it. We not only *break* the sacramental bread, but *eat* it; we not only *pour out* the wine, but *drink* it.

In like manner there must be *spiritual appropriation* of the death of our blessed Redeemer by each one of us, or we can by no means live by it; in the strong metaphor of his own declaration, we must eat his flesh and drink his blood. I need not guard

you against the absurd and monstrous error of transubstantiation. The efficacy of the broken body and the shed blood is appropriated by *faith*; Christ can be no otherwise received. He has himself, in the sixth chapter of St. John, clearly indicated the metaphorical import of his words about eating his flesh and drinking his blood: "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that *cometh to me* shall never hunger; and he that *believeth on me* shall never thirst;" "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." These statements, in the immediate context, clearly define the metaphor. Eating the flesh and drinking the blood represent the appropriation of the vicarious sufferings of Christ by faith.

When the Jews were offended at what he said about eating his flesh and drinking his blood, he replied, "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not." So does the Lord rebuke the gross, literal interpretation of his words.

Faith is the soul's act of receiving and assimilating whatever may be offered it. As faith *receives*, so unbelief *rejects*. The saving spiritual food of the Atonement is appropriated by faith, and cannot be otherwise appropriated; *for faith is the soul's act of receiving*.

The bread and wine are *not* transformed into the body and blood of Christ, to be literally taken into the stomach, to pass into the circulation. This view materializes religion; the Bible nowhere teaches it. Spiritual sustentation is not received in such a way; it cannot be.

If, in communicating, our faith and love are quickened, then we do feed on Christ. His death worketh in us mightily when our faith is strong; and this outward representation of the broken body and shed blood brings the scene of the Crucifixion so near to us, and makes it so real, that it does strongly tend to quicken faith.

We see him heave, and hear him groan,
And feel his gushing blood.

“Ye do *show* the Lord's death.” In this sacrament the Church makes perpetual exhibition of the cross in the world; Christ's death is set before the eyes of all. Many an unconverted man, whose sensibilities are proof against the appeals of the sermon, is melted when he sees his neighbors at the table of the Lord; the symbol appeals to him more commandingly than the exhortation. I cannot doubt that this exhibition of the great fact of our faith has gone far toward giving Christianity the power it has among men.

This institution is not only monumental and symbolical—

3. *It is also commemorative.* It is a memorial not only as it is a monument, but in a much more touching and personal way. Just the night before his

death he instituted the Supper, and said, "This do in remembrance of me."

Nothing affects us more than to receive a memento from a very dear friend when he is dying; nothing is so prized as such a gift. Perhaps you now have, somewhere under lock and key, a *souvenir*, the gift of your mother, placed in your hand the last hour of her life. "My son," she said, as she gave it to you, "take this, and remember me by it as long as you live." Her cold fingers touched your palm; you can never forget it. That object is of no value in itself; it is of no value to any one on earth but you; there is not a man who would give you five dollars for it; but there is not gold enough in California to buy it; to you it is invaluable—it is *your mother's dying love-gift*.

Christ had the Twelve around him; they were the nucleus of the Church in the Christian dispensation. To-morrow he will die for them; he loves them with an everlasting love; he will never have them all thus together again; he breaks the bread, and gives it to them; he pours out the wine, and they receive it. "Do this in remembrance of me." It was his dying love-gift to his Church. Not to the Twelve alone did he give this memento of his love; they were a representative company; they were his Church; and to *his Church* he committed the precious token. Every member in all the coming ages was present to him; you and I were there; we were as fully present to his prescient eye as Matthew, or Lebbeus, or James; he loved us, too, as he loved them; he would suffer for us as for them; it is *our* most precious memorial of his love.

If we were present to his eye then, so is he present to our faith now; as to his heart we were present at his table then, so is he present with us here. We take the love-gift to-day as if from his own hand. How reverently we handle it, not with superstitious awe, as if it were his very flesh, but with love and worship—not of it, but of him who gave it!

This hallowed token was committed to the Church in circumstances of tenderness the most affecting—circumstances that heighten its import and give it the greater value. There is something in eating and drinking together that makes it an expression of love. I know not how it is, but the *fact* I know: in all ages, and amongst all peoples, the rudest and the most cultivated alike, eating together has been the sign of good fellowship. How eminently and sweetly social was the nature of our Lord! Now and then he went away, leaving behind him all men, even his disciples, that he might have solitary communion with himself and with the Father; but for far the greater part of the time he was with the disciples, and often in the company of others. It is remarkable that in such brief accounts of his life there should be so much said about his being at dinners and suppers—at feasts. On such occasions he was always the center of interest—the heart of the scene. What a glow of hallowed feeling surrounded him among those who were his friends!

How deeply affecting is the *last* meal of a family together! Did you ever witness such a scene? I once knew a charming Christian family, in which there had been no death, and from which there had

been no departure, until the eldest son was twenty-four years of age, and the second about twenty-two. It was a happy household; there had always been the utmost harmony between the husband and wife, and among the children. It seemed impossible for the young men to break away, such was the domestic magnetism; but the time had come; the parents felt it; the sons felt it; the fruit was ripe, and must drop from the tree; the young men must go. The inward personal impulse, at last, has become stronger than the attraction of the old hearth-stone.

After long and anxious consultation, it has been determined that the two oldest shall go together to California. The day is set; the outfit is complete; at nine o'clock they are to leave the threshold—perhaps forever; they have received the last word of wise and loving admonition; they have been commended to God, in the morning-prayer, by a former pastor, who is invited now, especially for the occasion, to invest the scene with the atmosphere of religion.

They are at breakfast—the last meal at which they will all meet around the table! For twenty-five years the father and mother have met thrice a day at this table, and, one after another, through the years, these children—nine—appeared in their places; new places had been made, but no old one had ever been vacated. I have the scene before me now. The boys made a brave effort to seem happy; the father, at the foot of the table, distributed the meats with few words, spoken in a mellow voice; the mother, at the head, dispensed the coffee in silence, the tears drop-

ping over from the eyelids; the sisters could scarcely eat, and could not speak at all; the younger boys were somewhat more loquacious, in a subdued way; only the prattle of the two-year old, in the high chair on the right hand of his mother, was wholly unconstrained. There were hearts well-nigh bursting; for is not this mother preparing coffee for James and William, and handing it to them across the table, for the last time? The last meal of an unbroken family! For a quarter of a century there has been nothing but love and joy at this table until now; but *now* it is a deeper love, but O with what grief!

Our Lord, during his ministry, lived with the Twelve in a sort of domestic way. They were nearly always together; they had a common purse—Judas carried the bag; they were a family, with all the intimacies and confidences of such a relationship; they had constantly, though leading a wandering life for the greater part of the time, met at the same tables; no deeper love had ever characterized any circle. But the last night was approaching, and “*having loved his own, he loved them to the end.*” He had chosen them out of the world; they were as the apple of his eye.

He directed two of them to go before, from Bethany, into the city, and call on a man they would meet bearing a pitcher of water, to show them “the guest-chamber where he might *eat the passover with his disciples.*” In the large upper room that he would provide they were to make ready. What a tone of tenderness vibrates through all these directions!

All things are ready, and now he has "his own" around him at the table *for the last time*. I can imagine myself a witness when the Master casts his eye slowly, and with unutterable love, around the table; I can even now hear the tremulous but commanding voice, the vehicle of immeasurable tides of sensibility, as he says, "With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you *before I suffer*." *It was the last meal*. He was consciously, already, under the shadow of the cross; to-morrow he must *suffer*.

It was in the midst of such a scene of overwhelming tenderness that he consecrated the bread and wine to be a memorial of his love; for he was at the point to die, not on his own account, but *for them*. His voluntary death would be the divine expression of his love, but the broken bread and the wine poured out were appointed as the touching token and reminder of it through all the ages. This was the love-gift, so suggestive, so simple—just the love-gift to be kept and handled "in memory of him."

So memorable, so full of love and sadness, was the scene on that last night, at that last Supper, when Jesus instituted this commemorative sacrament. "In remembrance of me;" these words, so sad, so commanding in their sweetness, so overmastering in their gentleness, owe much of their power to the hour and the associations of the utterance. They have come down, vibrating through the generations, bringing responsive melodies and sobs from countless multitudes in many lands. They are but an undertone of holy love, yet the crash of

demolished empires, in all the terror of their downfall, has not been able to drown it. It is no less distinct now than when John heard it, leaning on the all-loving breast; and the pulses of it will mingle with the hoarse echoes of the trumpet-call that will bring all the dead to judgment.

“Christianity is the religion of sorrow;” these are the words of a world-renowned literary man. In a sense they are true; its author was “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” But if he had written, “Christianity is the religion of love,” he would have uttered a deeper truth. Brahmanism is mystic; Buddhism is austere; Confucianism is cold; Mohammedanism is harsh; but Christianity is the voice of love. To it we owe the statement, “God is love”—a sentence of only three words, but the greatest that was ever uttered. “God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life.” Christianity is love melted into compassion; it is the embodiment of divine pity. God incarnates himself among the lost and miserable, participating in their misery, that he may save them. It is incarnate tenderness; it is pity expressed in human forms, speaking in a human voice, and appealing to our deepest sympathies; so it is eminently the religion of the heart, and thus commands us through our sensibilities. It is just this that gives the sacramental Supper its value; it is a supreme expression of sensibility. It comes to us from the death-agony of our great Redeemer; it is the last avowal of love from his breaking heart

How blasphemous is the audacity of the driveling priest who converts the table into an altar, and enacts the solemn farce of offering the very Christ upon it in the form of bread and wine! No human priest can offer him; *he "offered himself* without spot to God," and that "once for all," and now "ever liveth to make intercession for us." Having suffered for us, he gave us this bread and wine, a most blessed memorial of his love; and now to see a poor, vain mortal "playing priest" with these dear tokens of his death—it is shocking, it is monstrous. No! no mortal hands can sacrifice HIM; he is, himself, both Priest and Sacrifice; only this symbol of his body and blood has he left, saying, "*This* do in remembrance of me." We obey the injunction, lovingly and in humility; we eat and drink, "discerning the Lord's body." Through the symbol we see the Saviour himself; we "feed on him by faith," and our faith is quickened in the act; our love is fed, and we know him more and more deeply; the tenderness of the dying token subdues us; it is a divine magnet; our hearts respond; we yield; love conquers us. We attach ourselves to him, and, in the bonds of a most holy love, we will be his forever.

While yet his anguished soul surveyed
Those pangs he would not flee,
What love his latest words displayed—
"Meet and remember me!"

Remember thee! thy death, thy shame,
Our sinful hearts to share!
O mem'ry, leave no other name
But his recorded there!

And when these failing lips grow dumb,
And mind and mem'ry flee,
When thou shalt in thy kingdom come,
Jesus, remember me.

We will now consider—

II. THE PROSPECTIVE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER. “Ye do show the Lord's death *till he come.*”

The advent and sacrifice initiate the great work of recovery and restoration; the second coming consummates it. While he was among us, in the flesh, he began his work; ascended to heaven, he still prosecutes it; but it will not be completed till he shall come again, at the end of the world, to gather his people from the four quarters of the world, and to judge the quick and the dead. The final coming is given in the first, which is the prophecy and assurance of it. The Lord of life and glory could not die but to triumph over death. The corn of wheat dies only to create life; the planting is the prophecy of the harvest. The two facts are correlated; they belong to each other, as parts of the same design. No one plants but in expectation of the harvest; Christ could not die but to rise, and reign, and consummate his own work. The second coming is, therefore, assured in the first.

This memorial is also, then, a prophecy; it is the feast of hope, as well as the feast of memory; it recalls the planting, and presages the ingathering. “Your sorrow shall be turned into joy.” This Supper is the scene of sorrow; but it is sorrow in transition—sorrow turning into joy. Darkness is upon

the scene; but its brow is softened by the dawn, and the day is at hand. We go to the cross to remember him, and to wait for his coming again.

Consider, first, *the contrasts between the first coming and the second.*

1. *At his first coming he was born of a woman.* The human expression was predominant during the time he was on the earth; not only so, but he assumed humanity in very lowly conditions. See him in the manger; see him a fugitive in Egypt; see him in the peasant's cottage, and in the poor carpenter's shop, in the humble village of Nazareth. He is not even taught letters; even during his ministry, while he is doing his mightiest works, he is surrounded by the lowly; "he is despised," and men "esteem him not;" "he is rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." At last, he is hunted to the death, and suffers with the wicked; pain and ignominy know no deeper abysses than those into which he descended.

But at his second coming he "shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God;" he shall appear in the full expression of his divine nature; "all the angels of heaven" will accompany him; he shall be revealed in "all the glory of the Father;" earth and heaven will be full of his glory.

2. *He came at first as the Lamb of God, to take away the sin of the world;* he was the sin-bearer; he came to suffer, to make atonement; he came to take our place before the law, to be the Victim of our penalty; he humbled himself, and became obedient unto

death, even the death of the cross; he suffered as a lamb—meekly, unresistingly.

But he shall come the second time without sin unto salvation; he will be “the Lion of the tribe of Judah,” “mighty to save;” he will not be the meek Victim, but the triumphant Deliverer; he will judge the nations; he will dispense the awards of eternity. The dead will be raised to meet him, and to receive their doom at his lips; he “shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” “Every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.” He will come to consummate his work. The redeemed shall be gathered from the four quarters of the earth; with their Lord they shall ascend the highest heaven, and enter into their great reward. The thrones of heaven will be at his disposal, and be given to his people.

3. *He came at first to be despised and rejected;* but when he shall come the second time he shall subdue all enemies, and put them under his feet; he “shall take to himself his great power, and reign” over all. The devil shall be cast into the bottomless pit; he shall be bound forever, and suffered to go out and deceive the nations no more. Wicked men “shall be severed from among the just,” and cast down with the prince of darkness into his abode.

4. At his first coming *one star* heralded the event and guided the wise men to the place where the Babe lay; an angel, also, brought the news to the

shepherds, and a company of angels in the upper regions glorified the air with celestial melodies.

But at his second coming the frame of nature shall be broken. Not the earth only shall be shaken, as at Sinai, under the concussion of this trumpet-blast, but also heaven; and all things that are shaken shall be removed; only that which cannot be shaken shall remain, and that is the kingdom which we have received—the kingdom of Christ. The heavens shall be folded as a worn garment, and changed; the earth shall be burned up; the very elements shall melt with fervent heat. Then, from the demolished heavens, and from “the cinders of the burnt earth,” God shall make “new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

Consider, secondly, *the interest of God's people in the first and in the second coming.*

1. In the Atonement they have pardon of their sins and reconciliation to God; but they must still submit to the grossnesses of an earthly condition and to the dishonors of the grave; but at the last day they shall enter into eternal life; the body shall be redeemed from death, and fashioned like unto their Lord's glorious body.

2. Now we are identified with the Master in his humiliation; we confess him among men; we are reproached with his reproach; we accept the cross; we join ourselves to the lowly Redeemer—the Nazarene, the rejected and despised Son of Mary.

But in that day, as we have confessed him before men, he will confess us before his Father and the holy angels. Here we accept the cross; there we

shall sit on the throne. Here reproaches have been heaped on our heads for his sake; there his hand shall honor us with the coronation of immortality. Here we suffer with him; there we shall reign with him.

The redeemed people of the Lord shall be above the angels; they shall be at the very side of Christ on the throne; for is not he our kinsman—"our Elder Brother?" The city of God shall be our home; the palace of the great King shall be our dwelling, and we shall be like children in their father's home.

Even when he was on the earth our Lord looked forward, with infinite yearning, to that day. "Father," he said, "I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory" They had witnessed only his degradation, and he longed for the time when they should see his glory.

This expectation touched and tinted even the "hour, and the power of darkness," at the last Supper. In the midst of the deathly sorrow there was also the presence of the immortal hope; it consoled even him, and even in that hour. The awful present suggested the glorious future. As he broke the bread and poured out the wine he shuddered, for they tokened his agony. "I will drink no more the fruit of the vine" *with you*. All the endearments of life are at an end now; this is the last; death ends the scene. But he was consoled; the glorious end of it all was in sight. "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, *until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.*" Ah! he "en-

dured the cross, despising the shame," "for the *joy that was set before him.*"

So, when we come into the shadow of the cross, and sit down at the table there, in the chill atmosphere and in the darkness of death, we, too, turn our tear-blinded eyes toward the glorious future, and realize the joy of a triumphant hope; we "do show his death *till he come.*" Then we shall "see the King in his beauty," and "be with him where he is;" we shall see his glory, and be ourselves partakers of it. While the universe is going to wreck, worlds tumbling upon worlds, we shall see him coming. Angels come and go about his presence, swift as lightning, to do his bidding—striping the skies with fire; the grave cleaves above me; he, sweeping down the sky, is the first object I behold; the earth takes fire as I ascend; but his eye is upon me. Not for terror of a world in flames, but for love of him, I fly upward, "above the fiery void," shouting, Lo, this is my God! I have waited for him, and he has come to save me.

These are the hopes that spring from the blood of the cross; these are the hopes that kindle into rapture at the table of our Lord. In his glory he will remember us, as we remember him in his shame this day.

Finally, this text is in the nature of a prophecy; it assures us of the perpetuity of this observance. So long as the world stands this sacred feast will continue. "Ye do show the Lord's death *till he come*"—"till he come."

Who, upon merely rational grounds, could have ventured to say that the simple eating of bread and

drinking of wine, by the assembled congregation, would continue as a custom of the Church for twenty years? But the apostle boldly predicted that it would never cease; eighteen hundred years have already vindicated the divine assurance. The Supper which took its origin at the cross will never lose its hold upon the Church; the sun of the last day will shine on thousands seated at the table of the Lord; the "trump of God" will surprise men at the feast. At the first there were *twelve* only, with the Master, at the table; now the table is set in all lands, and crowded with grateful thousands; and when he shall come he shall find it spread over every continent and all the islands of the sea. He parted with the Church at the table, in tears; and when he shall come again to take his people to himself, he shall take them from the table; he left them, as he shall find them, "feeding upon him by faith;" and, having nourished them by his own body, and sustained them by the "juices of the living Vine," he will take them up from their places at the feast to drink the new wine with him in his Father's kingdom.

At the table, to-day, we are in the midst of the ages; we form a part of a vast panorama. The scene opens at Calvary, in thick darkness; it moves on through successions of light and shade; it discloses our day; still the shadow falls on our bowed heads and throbbing hearts; but the light increases, and the last movement of the canvas reveals Mount Zion, blazing with uncreated light.

A Dedication Discourse.

SERMON IX.

“Thus saith the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord.” Hag. i. 7, 8.

HAGGAI was a prophet with a single function. The prophetic spirit was on him for only one purpose. There is large suggestion in this fact. When the Spirit of God came upon a man for one sole object, it must have been one of no little moment. The object in this instance was to hasten and assure the rebuilding of the temple.

At the time of the conquest of Judea by the King of Babylon the temple erected by Solomon was completely destroyed. All the more influential classes of the people were forcibly removed to Babylon. At the expiration of seventy years Cyrus made a very liberal provision for the return of such as desired it to their native land. He provided, also, large resources for the rebuilding of the temple. Of course, but very few of those who had

been carried away seventy years before were among those who returned. But the intense nationality of the Jew was transmitted from sire to son even in a foreign land. Perhaps it was even augmented in the children. We whose parents were emigrants to new regions remember with what depth of feeling, at the fireside, they related stories of the "old home," until our hearts almost broke with longing to see the place. It seemed to us different from any other place on earth; it was invested with the weird light of an imagination kindled from the heart; we never thought of its soil as being common earth, of its light as being ordinary sunshine, nor of its people as the mere every-day sort of men and women.

In the young Jew, born in exile, this feeling must have amounted to a passion. The intense feeling of the captive parents, in their fireside stories of the "goodly land," was, no doubt, communicated to the impressible young hearts that listened. It was the land that God had blessed—the land flowing with milk and honey. Its hills were alive with heroic memories. A thousand battles had disputed the title of their ancestors, and a thousand victories had defended it. God had given it to them. One had chased a thousand, and two had put ten thousand to flight. They had rested under the shadow of the Almighty; he had wrought confusion among their enemies, so that they fell upon each other in their own camps, and his people were delivered. Divine powers had suddenly appeared upon the scene whenever they were at the last extremity:

God had camped about them, and drawn around them lines of circumvallation and contravallation, and defended them with a will and a prowess which were actually omnipotent. Then there was Jerusalem, the city of David, the city of God, where the temple was, the place of holy solemnities. The robed priests had been there, and the Urin and Thummim, mysterious *media* of divine knowledge; and there had been the ark of the covenant, with the mercy-seat shadowed by the wings of the cherubim; there, too, had been the daily sacrifice, and the altar of incense, with acceptable odors perpetually wafted up to heaven.

But all was desolation now, and the mother's wondrous story was all broken into fragments by her grief as she gave it to her children punctuated with sobs. Thus to the Jew, born in Babylon, the holy land was as dear as to the captive torn away from his native soil. It was *his* home, too—the land given to his fathers, and to him, by the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob; it was the home of his soul, and the accident of his birth in Chaldea did not make it other than an alien land.

Never was the tide of human sensibilities at such flood as when the captives returned to the city of God. The memories of a thousand years swept their heart-strings at once. God had witnessed all their tears; they had suffered for their sins, but he was merciful even yet, as he had been to their fathers. He had heard their groaning, and now their eyes would see the land of delights, and the city of the great King. But they would find no temple,

and what was Jerusalem without the temple! The conditions were just those in which the sentiment of piety would be most acutely realized; the purpose of an entire devotion was in every heart; selfish aims were forgotten. The house of the Lord must be rebuilt the very first thing; till that was done they could live in hovels or in tents.

Upon their arrival in Jerusalem they concentrated their resources, and fell to work with the greatest energy and zeal upon the temple. The demolished walls were to be restored before any private enterprise could be thought of.

But when did it ever happen that uncommon zeal did not provoke opposition? Enemies appeared, false reports were made, and the civil arm was invoked to put a stop to the work, lest it should be the center of an insurrectionary movement. The opposition was successful; the building was arrested by authority, and the returned captives, under compulsion and with regret, abandoned the undertaking. For several years nothing was done.

The people betook themselves to private industries and enterprises. They prospered. The Hebrews were a prosperous people; they have been so in all ages and lands. If there is an exception to this, it is in the case of the Jew in Palestine in modern times. They are, and have ever been, as a race, distinguished for thrift. They were no sooner fairly at work again, after the captivity, than they began to prosper. The whole country was astir with new life; the city became animated with a growing commerce; men began to amass money and to

build houses for themselves; elegant residences appeared on all sides, and the house of God was forgotten.

But after a time all civil interference with the work on the temple ceased; nothing hindered now; it might be resumed at any moment. But, alas! there was not a hand raised toward it. There was no disposition to renew the work; if any one mentioned it, his neighbor would reply, "The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built." What a contrast, this coldness and reluctance, to the spirit with which they had begun!

But is it not often so? Some special occasion arises, and men's zeal becomes aroused; they show the most remarkable signs of self-sacrificing devotion; but it is paroxysmal; the occasion that excited the zeal passes, and they lapse into the old indifference.

So in the case before us. The return of the captives filled them with tenderness and joy; they overflowed with gratitude, and were ready to express it any way. They were eager to rebuild the temple, but time had now elapsed; private demands upon their exertion had diverted thought and feeling. They were beginning to prosper; they had become thoroughly interested in their own affairs. It was inconvenient now to devote themselves to the work on the temple; they could not break off from their own affairs, and suffer them to be deranged; they had laid plans of business that were only half completed; they were building houses for themselves that were not yet finished. *After awhile* they would

be ready to devote time and means to the Lord's house, but *not now*.

"Then came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying, Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste? Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways."

He addressed himself to all the people, but especially to the governor and the high-priest. He denounced God's displeasure against them for their selfish neglect of his house. Already his judgments had begun to fall on them; their harvests were short; they sowed much and brought in little, and there was mysterious waste in what they did gather. "Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labor of the hands."

The word took effect. Zerubbabel the governor, and Joshua the high-priest, led the way. Their example was contagious; "the people obeyed the voice of the Lord their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the Lord their God had sent him, and the people did fear before the Lord." God was

pleased, and charged the prophet with a "message unto the people, saying, I am with you, saith the Lord." Thus encouraged, their interest rose to enthusiasm, "and they came and did work in the house of the Lord of hosts, their God."

They were in danger of flagging after a time, when the walls began to rise, for it became apparent to the old men that this house for magnificence was "as nothing" in comparison with the former. But the prophet was ever present with them, with the Lord's message. "The Desire of all nations" should come into this house. "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts; and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts." When the house was finished the people shouted; but some aged men, who had seen the former house, wept for the contrast, so that it could not be known which prevailed, the voice of shouting or the voice of weeping. But the day approached when the splendors of the typical dispensation should be displaced by the purer splendors of the Incarnation. The Son of God himself would appear in this house, and the place of *his* footsteps is "more glorious than the mountains of prey;" all the gold, and gems, and winged cherubim of the former house were as nothing to his presence. The glory that is revealed to faith is the "glory that excelleth." All the splendors that blaze upon the eye are lost in it like stars that are brilliant in the night, but disappear in the morning. Thus by the promise of the "Desire of all nations," who should come into this place and

“give peace,” did Haggai strengthen their hands, and the work was completed.

There is, indeed, a very clear and distinct prophecy of Messiah in the Book of Haggai. Yet my first statement is true: the single function of this prophet is that of the temple-builder. The Messianic predictions are given as only incidental, and subservient to the main purpose; yet are they none the less important for that reason, perhaps even more so. Certainly, coming in this connection, they show the very great importance of the work the prophet had in hand—the building of a house for God.

We can scarcely exaggerate the importance of this matter. The interests of religion are concerned in it in a vital way. I shall call your attention to the following propositions:

I. THE NECESSITY OF PROVIDING HOUSES OF WORSHIP.

II. GOD TAKES PLEASURE IN THE WORK, AND IS GLO-RIFIED.

I. *The necessity of providing houses of worship.*

Every thing that establishes itself and maintains its footing in the world must be domiciled. Every principle must be embodied in some way, in order to deliver itself with effect upon human society.

All life, in this world, comes into expression through organizations; every thing must be incarnate in some way, in order to become known. Religion is no exception to this law; it must declare itself in organic forms; it must organize its votaries, and have established institutions which give expression to its vital nature. Otherwise, it would

be lost to human knowledge, and become inoperative among men; the subtle life-principle would be unperceived, and disappear from the forces of society.

Furthermore, all organizations require it, as a condition of permanency and power, that they shall have *domiciles*. They must be put between four walls, and under a roof; they must not lie about loose. They must have head-quarters, a definite place, where their business can be transacted and their records kept; they must have shelter, and a place of resort—there must be a rallying point.

No business can be carried on without a domicile; in a fugitive, unsheltered condition it would soon come to nothing. Every merchant must have his store; he cannot do so much as a commission business without, at least, an office; customers must know where to find him; he must have a convenient place to meet them, and certain necessary furniture and appurtenances. He must keep accounts, and have a proper place of deposit where they may be in safe keeping. You would be not a little surprised if an insurance company should announce itself ready for business, and yet have no place of business; it would require no prophet to predict the end; it would not take it six months to die—in fact, it would be still-born. Think of a bank setting up for business without a domicile! You cannot imagine such a thing.

Every Masonic lodge must have its hall, and so of Odd-fellows, temperance organizations, literary societies—every organization that attempts to get footing and do any thing in the world. They must

get in out of the weather; they must be protected from intrusion; their ceremonials require shelter; their appurtenances must be under a roof. The members must know where to assemble, and it must be where they can assemble under any stress of storm or temperature. No lodge of Grangers thinks of undertaking to exist without providing cover for itself.

Legislatures, government offices, courts of justice, boards of aldermen, boards of trade—every thing—must be domiciled.

The Church is no exception; the nature and purposes of its organization require shelter for it as much as any other. Each congregation must have its well-known accustomed place and times of meeting; its very existence depends upon the habitual and frequent assembling of its members; both for its public assemblages and more private communion there must be a house; there must be habitual maintenance of the ordinances and sacraments; its solemnities all require for their due and suitable observance proper architectural accommodation; the teaching function of the ministry requires it.

Whatever organization or interest it may be that wants sufficient vital force to create a domicile for itself will soon vanish into thin air; it is too attenuate to subsist in the conditions of time: if it is too feeble to get itself in by the fire, somewhere, nothing can save it; out in the cold and in the tempest it must perish; and a thing so feeble, with so little vitality, will die readily; there can be no great power of resistance, no great tenacity of life. Every thing

that has sufficient vitality to render it of any use in the world will be able to find shelter for itself.

More than that: an organization notifies the world of its own character in the architectural expression it takes on. If vitality is full and large, the house will show it; if it is infirm and inefficient, the tumble-down house will proclaim the fact.

I have known healthy Churches that had no better place than private houses, or school-houses, to meet in. They were, however, in new regions of country, recently settled, and were young Churches, that had not had time to gather resources; but I never did know a Church that attempted that fugitive sort of existence as a permanency that did not fall into decay. I never knew a Church, in the midst of a prosperous community, to thrive without providing a permanent and respectable house of worship. In a house either too small or too shabby, to be respectable it gives evidence of one of two facts: either that it is feeble in numbers, or that religion has a hold on the consciences and hearts of its members altogether too slight for reproductive power; it will soon do better or become extinct; its architectural expression is the sign of dissolution; there is not life sufficient to maintain itself.

When a Church can do no better it must lease or rent; but that will hardly do for permanency. As an expedient, and in an exigency, it is better than nothing—provided, always, that it looks to better things; but every Church ought, if possible, to hold real estate in fee. It is a bad thing to be at the mercy of a landlord. Ownership of real estate gives

a certain dignity and air of permanency that have great value; it gives a feeling of respectability and confidence, and this makes a very appreciable factor in the prosperity of a Church. There is something powerfully conservative in a real estate title. Anchor a Church in the soil, and you add greatly to its fixity and tenacity; it will bear a much heavier strain than it could otherwise do. It is much more difficult to destroy a Church so circumstanced than one that is afloat; there is a place in which every member feels that he has a special interest. I have known a few instances of Churches falling into decline that would certainly have been fatal but for the ownership of a house; if they had been renters they would have given up in despair; but the few faithful survivors had their house, and that held them, and, holding on to existence through the dark period, the time of revival and rejuvenescence has come to them; they have had a new lease of life and a new career of prosperity and usefulness.

There is in man an instinct of house-building; from the earliest times, and among the rudest peoples, it is traced. The family makes itself a *home*—if not a house, a hut, or at least a tent; each has its own place, where it shuts itself in. And so soon as civilization advances sufficiently to create community interest, and to realize corporate needs, houses for other purposes than family shelter are built. Every interest creates itself a house so soon as it becomes sufficiently vital, and from the moment it begins to build it becomes a fixed fact in the life of the people. The religious, no less than other forms

of consciousness, comes into prominence and power in this way.

From the first the followers of Christ had their customary places of meeting; at the very first they were probably, for the most part, private houses. In times of persecution it was often necessary to meet in very obscure places, and to come together furtively; the cover of dead hours of the night was often courted; but there was the inevitable instinct which sought some place of common resort; so soon as circumstances allowed they began to build. Wherever they were allowed to assemble openly and unmolested they had their houses, and, at an early day, began to build *costly* houses.

There is a question of conscience as to the cost of houses of worship. Mr. Wesley advised the Methodist people strongly against building costly houses. After they are built they involve heavy incidental expense. The reason Mr. Wesley gave was characteristic of him, and, you will allow me to say, suggests matter of serious reflection for us at this time. "If we build costly houses," said he, "then rich men will become necessary to us. Then farewell to Methodist discipline, if not doctrine, too." That is an enslaved Church that finds it necessary to court and hold on to its rich men because they cannot be spared from the assessment list. What corruptions creep in at that door! Have there not been cases of men being tolerated in practices altogether repugnant to their Christian profession, for the reason that their contributions were too large to be dispensed with in the financial estimates?

I cannot doubt that in some cases there is too great an outlay of money in building churches, especially in the great cities. I know some houses that are too large—they are unwieldy; it would have been better if the money had been put into two houses; more people would have been served, and they would have been better served; but, then, the congregation that builds one of these costly structures could not have been induced to build except for its own accommodation. The *two* houses would not have been built, even if the *one* had not cost half so much.

In smaller towns and country-places, the tendency is, perhaps, in the other direction; old and inadequate houses are used too long. But there is great improvement of late years; many villages and country-places have neat houses, sufficiently commodious—houses which are a worthy expression of the piety of the communities which they serve. I think a good general rule is that the house of God should compare well with the best class of houses among the people who worship in it.

Some houses in the country are miserably kept; I have seen them with no fence surrounding, and with the door standing open, habitually; I have actually known sheep, in one or two cases, to resort to them for shelter; often have I seen months' accumulation of dust and filth upon the floor. But I am glad to believe there is general and great improvement in this respect, in the last few years, in the West; and I know but little of country churches except in the West.

The architectural design of a house must conform to its uses. You require one plan for your residence, and another one, altogether different, for your shop or store. The court-house and the bank cannot be constructed upon the same plan; the insurance-office and the town-hall are very diverse structures; the dwelling must provide a room for culinary operations, one for storage of domestic supplies, one for a dining-room, one for the family sitting-room, a more pretentious one for special occasions and formal visits, with apartments for privacy and repose; the merchant must have his store contrived for the advantageous display of his wares; and so of the structure for every different purpose—it must be suited to its uses.

So, also, must the house of God be; it has a special and peculiar purpose, and its construction must be in adjustment with its object.

I have known a few instances of Protestant churches constructed after a design not at all suited to their purpose, but tending strongly to defeat it, just to gratify a fancy, and to affect the antique in architectural taste. Some old, mediæval church in Italy served for the model—a church projected upon the idea that the Christian ministry is a priesthood, that worship is the principal thing to be provided for, and that worship in the congregation is to be performed with scenic effect. To this idea the structure was conformed; but this, precisely, rendered it unfit for use as a Protestant church.

In the Protestant conception of it, the ministry is *not* a priesthood, nor is worship the principal thing,

nor is scenic effect to be studied in public worship. Worship is an important part of the public service; but its perfection is in its simplicity. Nor is the minister in any sense, in his official character, a priest. He does not enact the solemn and blasphemous farce of transforming the bread and wine into the body, and blood, and soul, and divinity of Christ, and offering them as such, in the mass, on the altar, a sacrifice for the sins of the people; it is no part of his prerogative to hear a private confession of sin, and pronounce upon it judicially. The Protestant minister makes none of these monstrous assumptions. He knows that Christ offered himself *once for all* on the cross, that the doctrine of transubstantiation is a shocking and most wicked pretense, and that the pretended offering of the host for the quick and the dead is a blasphemy never exceeded in enormity since the world began.

The chief function of the Christian minister is that of a witness and teacher. The terms of his commission define his office: "Go ye into all the world, and *preach* the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned;" "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." The minister of Christ *preaches the gospel*. There has been no official priesthood on the earth since our Lord ascended. The Aaronic priests were typical of him;

but he is the only true Priest, and his priesthood abideth ever.

There is a general sense in which all God's people are priests—"a kingdom of priests," offering "the sacrifice of praise to God continually"—but the minister has no distinct priestly function. He is a *preacher*, with authority to administer the simple rites of the Christian faith, and to lead in public worship; he is naturally a leader in religious matters, and has a certain authority in the government of the Church.

According to the word of God, then, the Christian minister is a preacher.

But what has this to do with the structure of houses of worship? Much, and in a very important way: it involves the fact that the main thing in the house of God is *the auditorium*. Every such house should be designed under the influence of this supreme consideration. Sinners are awakened and converted, and the Church is edified, the man of God thoroughly furnished unto good works, through the preaching of the word. The word of God is the chief instrument in the salvation of men, and in the immediate work of awakening men it is the word, not so much as it is written as through that wonderful instrument, the human voice. God has especially chosen the voice of the living minister—the preacher of righteousness—as the vehicle of the living word; it is to be preached "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven."

Auditory effect, then, is the chief thing to be secured in the design of a church. I suggest several

things which the building committee ought to keep in mind:

First. The proportions of the auditorium should be such as experience has proved to be the best for the purpose of aiding a distinct articulation.

Second. The space between the preacher and the congregation ought to be no greater than necessary.

Third. If there be galleries, they ought not to be high, but contrived so as to bring the occupants into the best relation to the preacher. The Congregationalist Church in St. Louis, corner of Washington and Ewing avenues, is the most perfect building, in this respect, I have ever seen.

Fourth. By no means let the floor of the pulpit be too greatly elevated for the size of the house.

Fifth. Never exhaust the stock of a lumber-yard in building the pulpit. Do not construct it as if the chief design were to erect a barricade, with a view to protect the congregation against the preacher; rather give the word opportunity. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation; if it kills, it is only that it may make alive; let it have way; beware of expensive contrivances to break the force of it. It seems to me I have wasted sufficient nerve-force in overcoming the dead space between the pulpit and the pew to have awakened a thousand sinners.

But in every essential respect there is improvement in recent times. Indeed, the Church has cause of congratulation in the present taste and good sense of the people in the matter of church-building. Allow me, in conclusion on this point,

to advise every building committee, especially in the country and towns where they do not propose to pay a professional architect for a design, to procure the Rev. W. M. Patterson's book on "Church Architecture" before they settle upon a plan. It will amply repay the cost.

II. *In the building of a house for his name, God takes pleasure, and is glorified.*

"Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house, and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord."

"I will take pleasure in it." Thrilling words to the heart of the true Christian!

The Christian consciousness is a filial feeling toward God. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father"—crying, Father, Father. God's Spirit in his people creates in them the child-feeling toward him. Nothing is more deeply felt in the consciousness of a child than an exquisite satisfaction in the approbation of its father. In the enjoyments of childhood there is scarcely any other so profound, so entirely satisfying, as this; nor is there any other fact of Christian consciousness so full as a sense of the forgiving love and approbation of God. Now, he has revealed to us, in the text, the fact that he takes pleasure in the labor of his children in building a house for the honor of his name; the thought they give to it, the concern they feel about it, the time appropriated, and the labor bestowed,

have his warm approval. With infinite complacency he sees them busied in such an affair.

In the summer of 1875 I dedicated a church in the Prickly-pear Valley, Montana Territory. It was a case in which this text was strictly and literally applicable. In that region there is no timber in the valleys; it is found exclusively in the mountains, while the arable land lies in the valleys only. Farmers, therefore, are under the necessity of bringing their timber, generally, from considerable distances. So when the exigences of the community, in the instance I speak of, demanded a church, the people got together, and with axes and teams did actually "go up to the mountain," a distance, I suppose, of twelve or fifteen miles, "and bring wood, and build the house." I could imagine the Infinite Father looking down and smiling upon the pious labors of his people. Nor is he less interested in the toil of those who love him when they are engaged in the erection of an humble country chapel with united labor, according to their ability, than in the contribution of thousands by a wealthy people to provide for themselves a gorgeous temple. It is not mere imagination that sees the light of his love glinting upon the polished ax-blade as it swings in the sunshine, or hears the deep, paternal tone of his voice in the rustle of the breeze in the forest foliage overhead. The beaded sweat upon the brow of the stalwart laborer is a crown of honor, for it is the sign of his faith in God which brings upon him a profounder sense of the presence of the Father of spirits. Returning in the evening to his

repose, the cool air soothes and caresses him more tenderly, as if the well-pleased Father had sent invisible seraphim to fan him with their wings. All the forest-voices about his path bring him messages of approval, and even the silence is the benediction of the Almighty upon his restful spirit; his labor has put him into conscious communion and affinity with all holy things—a communion which relieves the labor of all grossness and transfigures it till its raiment seems glistening white. “I will take pleasure in it”—what a sense of peace the world cannot give comes upon the soul upon which these words fall from the voice of God!

But can it be so? Does our little labor interest Him who builded the universe, and whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain? Can He whose ideas are archetypes of grandeur and beauty, in all their multitudinous possibilities, take any pleasure in the poor product of the human brain and hand? I answer, No! not as they are mere physical products of art—no! but as they are expressions of something else, *Yes!* A boy at labor in the shop, exhausting all his skill in imitation of his father’s handiwork, has done his best; his heart is in it, and he has done what he could; it is a clumsy, crude imitation, and will scarce serve any purpose, but the filial heart is aglow with generous endeavor. Is the father interested in such an abortion of art? No!—yes! As it is a mere expression of art, No; but as it interprets the boy to him, as it proves the generous devotion of his heart, and is the sign of potential skill, the proof of undeveloped powers,

the prophecy of high achievement, Yes! a thousand times, yes! There is a great tide of approving pleasure swelling in the father's heart.

The magnificence of our little work, as it is mere magnificence, can, of course, be nothing to the Infinite World-builder. The most exquisite tracery of chisel and pencil, as it is mere art, can awaken no interest in Him who has put more work upon a feather of down in the fringe of a butterfly's wing, both in the carving and coloring, than appears in the finish of the most gorgeous temple. But as these sincere endeavors are the prompting of the filial heart, God *does* take pleasure in the puny efforts of his child. Nay, more: they are the crude apprentice-work which gives proof, already, of a coming greatness which will satisfy even the Maker himself.

Best of all, these services rendered to God are the sign of faith. His child begins to recognize him, to be conscious of him, and to respond to his voice; it begins to smile when he caresses it, and to be happy when he notices it. Who knows what the beauty of this mere bud of intelligence is in the eye of its Maker, just as it begins to open? The immature, closed petals begin to be conscious of the solicitations of the vernal warmth; they are already tremulous under the kisses of celestial sunbeams, and the child-life brings all parental raptures upon itself as it hides in the abysses of undeveloped being the possibilities of immortal blessedness and achievement. The very inadequacy of the present disclosure gives the inexpressible charm which is in all vital beginnings. What abysmal tendernesses,

what joy-depths, are sounded and agitated by the word "father" the first time it is dropped into parental consciousness from these artless lips! There is a magic in the infantile voice in comparison of which all the wisdom of maturer lips is prosy and commonplace; its very imperfections and blunders are more delightful and exquisite than the faultless flow of Attic culture.

Yea, verily, God *does* take pleasure in the house that is builded for his name, though it be the rude log structure of the frontier settlement. It is human infancy beginning to be conscious of its father; and is he not pleased? Truly, our anthropomorphic conception of the divine consciousness is doubtless most imperfect, or even more deeply faulty—it may be so inadequate that it is not correct; but the Bible encourages it, and no doubt it is the best that we are capable of in the present childhood of our being. God is love, and we know love only in its human forms; so God's love took the human form in the Incarnation, that we might be able to perceive it. Even if we blunder, it is the best we can do, and he sees it as the beginning of a Godward consciousness that is to go on from this artless inadequacy even to perfection. One thing we know: that is, that he assures us of a condescension, and pity, and tenderness toward us, of which the paternal heart is the best expression we are able to receive. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him; for he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust." He *will* come, he *does* come, into the poor houses we

build to meet us. Though in comparison of the heavenly architecture they be but the toy-houses of little children, the great and good Father will delight himself with his children even there. Did you ever see a father enter the frail structure erected by his little ones, sit down on the rude seat, and drink make-believe coffee from an acorn-hull cup? Never was he more pleased than then! never were they more joyful! What they had done was such as they could do. As for him, he takes pleasure in it; and they—why, they are in ecstasies.

Is this too trivial for illustration? Trivial! these passages of love between a father and his children trivial! If such is your verdict, you see life only on the surface.

I have heard all your learned talk about the immutability of God as a necessary logical corollary of the Divine Perfection. The Infinite, the All-perfect One can never be affected by incidents; the Infinite Blessedness can never be other than it is—Infinite Blessedness; the accidents of finite life can never affect it. He can be in no relation to the coming and going of finite individuality that will disturb, or in any wise affect, his consciousness. All this, no doubt, is very logical and very profound, with much other speech about the unconditioned; yet I have a suspicion that if these philosophers could only see the Infinite Life in its deepest import they would see it in vital sympathy with all life, and that it is, and must be, in conscious relations with all life in all its conditions, and that Infinite Perfection does not involve mere placid monotony of con-

sciousness; rather, it supposes a perfect sense of all that is. The Infinite Pity is conscious of *me*, and in it is the fullness of parental care.

But by searching we cannot find out God; we *do* know so much as this, however, that when we delight in his will he takes pleasure in our ways; that when we build a house for his honor he takes pleasure in it, and meets us, and condescends to the childish endeavor of our homage; he comes to us in the ordinances of his house; he listens to our half-articulate utterance of his name, and answers the call, and caresses us with such assuring endearments that we feel almightiness to be turned to love, and overflowing upon *us—even us*.

After you have once been consciously with God, in his house, the very aspects of the place are different; echoes of the loving voice seem to linger, and the atmosphere is tremulous with inaudible melodies; the walls, the ceiling, the windows, the chancel, seem all to be perpetually pronouncing a silent benediction upon you; it is as if the word "Peace" were written all over the place in invisible characters. God has declared his pleasure in your work, has visited you in the house you have built for him, and has put his signet upon the walls, so that the very "walls are salvation, and the gates praise."

"And I will be glorified, saith the Lord."

How can the All-glorious be glorified by me? Can my poor work add to the grandeur of his name? Most surely not; but his people and their work are the *media* through which his glory is made known

on the earth. He utters his glory through them; they give it expression; they declare it abroad.

All the perfections of his nature constitute his glory; there is some utterance of it in the manifestations of his power and wisdom in the works of his hands; but its fullest utterance is in the work of Christ. The creation of physical nature, in such masses, scattered through such spaces, and with such adjustments, declares his "power and Godhead;" but nature is without significance until it is inhabited by life. The mansion may be beautiful, but the domestic life within lends it all its charm. Not in unconscious matter, but in living spirit, is the true glory. The highest display of the divine glory is not made in geometry and natural history, but in the ordering of his government with respect to man. What he proposes and does for the destiny of intelligent creatures is the crowning exhibition of the infinite excellency; and the gift of his Son for the recovery of a lost world is the crowning fact of all. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." As this great fact becomes more widely and deeply fixed in the faith of men, God is glorified. He is glorified in the building of a house of worship, in several ways:

1. It subordinates the physical to the spiritual; it puts property to spiritual uses; it redeems money from sordid meanings, and turns it to high account; it goes to establish the kingdom of God in the realm of nature; it extends the domain of the gospel, and asserts the dominancy of divine things; it puts

tongues into wood and stone, to proclaim the name of God and Christ; it gives voice to dumb beams and walls, and makes them eloquent of eternal things.

Whoever passes along the highway, and sees this house, will be reminded of all holy things; it will articulate the word of God to him, in most impressive utterance. The most profligate, who never enter the house of prayer, will see it, and, in spite of themselves, they will think of sin and of a Saviour. Children will gaze upon the tapering spire, and it will look like "an angel's finger pointing toward the sky." The resonant bell will sound forth the Lordship of the Son of God over an area of many square miles, in tones both sweet and solemn.

The erection of a church is the homage of both labor and capital to Christ; in it a man's toil, or that which he has toiled for, is consecrated. The Godward consciousness is never more fully realized than in this, nor the divine sovereignty more fully asserted. What a man plans, and delves, and sweats for, goes to God; he is honored by both brain and muscle—the mind and heart—the whole man; thus he is *glorified*.

2. God is glorified in the provision made for the preaching of the gospel. The Church is a convenient place of resort for all who are disposed to hear the word; it invites all who may be in reach to habitual audience of the truth, and sets wide its door to the thoughtless straggler who may be passing.

The public preaching of the word of life is an ordinance of God. Private approach, dealing with men one at a time—the affectionate urgency of indi-

vidual appeal—is not to be dispensed with; it is often successful where the public discourse has failed. It too often happens that men become accustomed to the formalities of the public service, and are little affected by it; the preacher seems to them just to be addressing the crowd; they lose themselves in the mass—sink all sense of individual interest, being only integers in the sum of auditors—and do not feel, each for himself, that the word is meant for *him*; there is, therefore, need for individual effort.

But while there is a certain truth in all this, yet it remains that the public ministry of the word is the chief instrumentality in the work of saving souls; since the sermon on the day of Pentecost this has been so; it is God's own ordained means to this end, and he who created men knows the agencies most likely to reach them. Many things conspire to the efficiency of this means; eloquence has a marvelous charm, and it is before the public audience that the tongue is inspired to its highest achievement; the enthusiasm, once kindled, is augmented by the presence of the multitude. There is a subtle, unaccountable contagion of thought and feeling amongst men when they are massed; one thought, one passion, getting possession of the whole, every unit in the mass becomes at once communicative and recipient of the common consciousness, and contributes to augment both its intensity and volume. Of this law, at once so subtle and so powerful, the most is made in this great agency of the kingdom of God. The inspiration of the orator by the multitude, and the augmentation of responsive sensibil-

ity by the same presence, constitute the natural basis of the power of preaching.

To this is to be added, by special provision of grace, "the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven;" this is that stupendous source of power upon which we are to depend. The power of the word is not found only in its own supreme significance, not only in the inspirations of orators and assemblies, but in the presence of the Holy Spirit; it is he who gives it momentum as it is projected from human lips; the words go forth upon divine propulsion; when his word goes abroad among men, making him known in his eternal justice and truth, and in the fullness of his saving mercies, *he is glorified*.

3. God is glorified in the place of public worship, in the assemblies of his saints.

Though preaching is the chief function of the Christian ministry, it is not the sole use of the house of God; the solemnities of public worship are scarcely less important; the place where his people come together for united prayer and praise is, indeed, hallowed; this is the immediate, formal ascription to him of the honor that is his due; it is the public avowal of our recognition.

"Praise is comely for the upright." I suppose there is no other employment of created faculties so purifying, so ennobling, as the contemplation and worship of the Uncreated; no other object of thought is so pure, or so provokes purity; and when thought takes the form of worship, then every affection feels the touch of the All-holy. In private worship we come "into the secret place of his tabernacle," and

the confidences of unparticipated and unwitnessed communion bring the soul into closest fellowship with God. There are some wants and sorrows, there are certain occasions of love, and joy, and tenderness, that must be sacred between a man and his Maker; the deepest religious experiences belong to the closet; the instincts and impulses of a sanctified spirit tend strongly to the privacies and freedom of solitary prayer and praise; it must have the luxury of unshared approaches to God; it must enjoy occasions when it can have him all to itself.

But our social nature, also, demands worship in another form. It is eminently fit that partakers of a common grace should offer a united homage, and that *public* honors should exalt the name of God amongst men; high-sounding praises should give his fame to the winds of heaven and to every ear; the homage of the Church must come abroad among all that love him, and be witnessed by all who hate him; praise must make a vehicle of music, and in the raptures of triumphant melody exalt him that sitteth upon the throne; we must provoke each other to laud and magnify his most holy name by the inspiration of responsive symphonies. "Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion; for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee." "Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the name of the Lord; praise him, O ye servants of the Lord. Ye that stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God, praise the Lord; for the Lord is good: sing praises unto his name; for it is pleasant." Thus is God honored in his house.

4. God is glorified in his house by the solemnities of the sacramental service; through the simple, but most impressive, rites of baptism and the holy Supper there is suggestive exhibition of his glorious grace; the inmost truths are interpreted to the eye: in baptism, the cleansing efficacy of the Holy Spirit is symbolized in the use of water, and in the sacramental Supper we “do show the Lord’s death till he come.”

5. In his house he is glorified in the consummation of his gracious purpose in the work of salvation.

God is not confined to time or place; in the new creation the Spirit is free; faith realizes the transforming power at the moment of its exercise, whether it may be here or there. But in the house of prayer, more than in any other place, are these wonders wrought; and these are the chiefest glories of his power; where his word is ministered, and his people supplicate his presence together, “this and that man are born”—born to a new life in God. One hour of his saving presence, in his house, when souls are coming into life eternal, transcends all the splendors of the first creation. The shout of a soul, when it first knows God, is more worthy of his ear than all the strains that celebrate the birth of worlds.

6. Here his people are edified in love; here the babes in Christ are fed with the “sincere milk of the word,” and mature men with the “strong meat.” The holiness of his people, more than all other things, *glorifies him*; for this Christ died; for this the Spirit is ministered; to this all the methods of redemption

look. The universe was created only that it might become worthy of its Creator in being inhabited by intelligent beings, radiant in the “beauties of holiness.” Take away this light, and the blackness of darkness would cover all things; nature would be a waste without meaning; there would be no eye to perceive the glory of God, no tongue to proclaim it; to this the first creation looked, and it is this that the new creation effectuates; for this new heavens and a new earth shall be created, after the “former things are passed away.” “Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, forever;” heaven itself shall be radiant with this light. But the “holy seed” are nurtured in the house of God; no wonder he should say, “I will be glorified,” even in the temples which we build.

To what divine honors are we raised, in that we are permitted to enhance the glory of the Infinite One on earth! But, brethren, it is even so. “We are workers together with God;” we are—and this is the wonder of wonders—*media* through which the work of God is wrought; we are admitted to participation in both the labors and the joy of our Lord. When we least think of it, in the humblest contributions to the sanctuary, we are glorifying God; and well may we feel that our joy is full when he condescends to notice our work, and to proclaim his pleasure in it.

Our Lord's Doctrine Respecting Riches.

SERMON X.

"And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward. Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore. And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon,

who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things; and they derided him." Luke xvi. 1-14.

OUR Lord was a pointed Teacher; his discourses were suited to times, and places, and persons; he addressed himself expressly to particular classes of persons who were present. This parable of the unjust steward was intended for his own followers: "And he said also unto his disciples," etc. The *design* of the parable was, unquestionably, to instruct the Church as to our relation to property, and the opportunities involved in it; in other words, he teaches his people how to use money wisely; *wisely*, not in a general view, but for our own advantage. He informs us how we may get the most out of our money by proper sagacity in managing and investing it; he brings to our knowledge the glorious opportunities we have in connection with property. The object—at least, the immediate point of instruction—is not to insist on a generous regard for others; it is not to inculcate charity—at least, that is not the main topic—but to show us how to make the best, that is, the most paying, investment. The man who desires to make the most of his money ought, by all means, to study this parable.

Nothing is more common than for men to make blunders in investing. Particular pieces of real estate lose their value, securities prove worthless,

debts are lost; thus many a bulky estate shrivels and goes to nothing—thus many a rich man finds himself a beggar before he knows it. Merchants fail, banks break, manufacturing companies become insolvent; riches make themselves wings and fly away. Or, if investments do not prove wholly disastrous, there is often shrinkage, or, at least, they are unproductive; they were made with large expectation of brilliant returns, but, though there may be no actual loss, at least nothing is made.

Men who have money are anxious about it; they look eagerly around for a secure place to put it, where it will be safe and yield, if not largely, at least *something*. Our Lord comes to their relief in this parable; he speaks to the common sense of his disciples as to the investments which will enrich them most certainly, and yield the most liberal returns.

Not only are men disappointed in their investments, but also in their expenditures. How often they incur large expenses, and find themselves disappointed! They lay out money for luxurious living, and, lo! they have bought dyspepsia; they bargain for a fish, and get a serpent; they give brilliant entertainments, at heavy cost, and some envious criticism embitters the feast; they pay for a night's pleasures, and get a week's sickness. They spend money like water on their sons, incurring expenses for costly clothing, expenses for fast horses, expenses for wine-parties, expenses in popular colleges, expenses without stint and without grudging. They think by all this lavish expenditure to train their boys to be elegant gentlemen, but in the end

they find that they have put them on the highway to dissipation and vagabondism. So much money laid out only to purchase infamy! For their daughters money goes out in uncalculating profusion. They must be reared in elegant idleness, and educated in all the accomplishments; money for the fashionable school, money for the dancing-master, and money, fabulous amounts of money, for dress, and gewgaws, and parties, and watering-places—thousands on thousands. And what is the commodity in hand, the purchase of all this money? Ask at the end of twenty years. A trifling husband, a dissipated estate, and a miserable woman. These men incubate upon money, and hatch cockatrice's eggs; they plant gold, and gather a harvest of thistles.

Is there no help for this? Is man doomed, in his relations with money? Is there no divine philosophy to relieve the case? Must gold always turn to arsenic?

Beloved, the Son of God has redeemed money as he has redeemed man; and this parable, which is our text, may be fitly entitled, "The Gospel of Money."

I speak of riches, of property, using the word "money" in my discourse for the reason for which money itself is used in business. It represents all commercial values; it stands for property, and I use the word as the equivalent of the word "property;" I do not mean simply money, but every thing money represents.

The natural analysis of the text I have read divides it into three parts. The first part is the nar-

rative—the parable proper; the second part is a general remark which our blessed Lord makes upon the narrative; the third part consists of several distinct uses our Lord makes of the narrative, in the way of application. The first part ends in the middle of the eighth verse, the second embraces only the remainder of that verse, and the third comprises the rest of the passage.

The division of the sacred text into chapters and verses was made by uninspired men in comparatively recent times, and, however convenient for reference, to enable us to identify and turn to special passages, it often embarrasses the understanding. The mechanical appearance of the text on the page, broken into short paragraphs, suggests a corresponding break in the connection; but the truth is, in this division there was no regard to the connection of thought, but the closest unity is often violated. In my early life I am sure I was kept back a long time from understanding many important passages just by this unnatural interruption. Every verse seemed to me to be a paragraph by itself, and I could scarcely put it, in my thought, into close connection with what preceded and followed. Such influence has the eye upon the mind, that it would be well for children to study editions of the Bible in which the text is divided into paragraphs according to the sense.

I suggest to you to study this parable and its lessons in the light of the analysis I have given; your understanding of it will, I am sure, be greatly aided. Remember that there is the narrative, ending in the

middle of the eighth verse, the general remark, in the last part of the eighth verse, and the applications following.

I. THE PARABLE PROPER—THE NARRATIVE.

The characters of the parable are a rich man, his steward, and certain men indebted to the rich man. The rich man was the proprietor of a large estate, and the steward was employed to take charge of the business; the rich man owned all, the steward managed it.

The lesson of the parable hinges on the office of the steward, the nature of the office, and on the course pursued by this particular steward.

The word "steward," in our present popular usage, does not give an adequate idea of the functions of the steward among the Orientals. He was an *employé* of no mean grade; in charge of large business, with responsibility of transactions, he must be a man of intelligence and business training. He was not a common servant, with his tasks set, but represented the proprietor, with authority to buy and sell, and trade and make settlements; he had large discretion; whether the estate would prosper depended greatly on his energy and sagacity. How important this employment was may be illustrated by the case of Abraham, and the respectable character of the men who engaged in it, as well. When the patriarch's estate increased, so as to justify and require it, he employed a man from Damascus, trained to business, no doubt, in that great commercial center. The steward must not only be intelligent and capable, but *trustworthy*; if he were

unprincipled, he might ruin every thing in the run of a few years. How respectable a man "this Eli-ezer of Damascus" was will appear from the fact that the patriarch confided to him the delicate responsibility of negotiating for a wife for his son, as well as the care and escort of the bride on a long journey. It is evident that this man was held in high regard by his employer—it is important to keep this in mind for the interpretation of the parable. The steward was no menial, but a business agent, with large discretion, and in a most responsible relation to his employer's affairs; he was the principal man after his "lord," as the employer is entitled in this narrative.

But the steward of the parable was wanting in a capital qualification; he was accused to his lord "that he had wasted his goods." The suggestion is not that he was guilty of peculation with a view to hoarding; he had laid up nothing, for so soon as he was turned adrift by his employer he was thrown upon his wits for bread. He wasted the goods, possibly through carelessness, probably in prodigal living, not hesitating to lay his hand on his lord's property for the exigences of dissipation. That he was intended to be regarded as dishonest is evident from the fraudulent settlements with the debtors which he is represented as making. The character delineated is that of an unscrupulous spendthrift, intrusted with another man's property, and making free with it in the gratification of his own expensive desires. He was *wasting* his employer's goods.

Upon this accusation, his lord called him to ac-

count. "Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward." He was summoned to an investigation; the master had already the conviction that he was guilty; yet should the investigation prove him innocent, we are to suppose, he would be kept in his place, and between the time of the notification and the investigation he still held his place, having authority to make transactions. But the interval was short, and he knew his own guilt, and foresaw the fatal issue of the examination; he was at a crisis—he was in extremity. The question before him did not concern his honor; disgrace was inevitable, and perhaps he cared little for that. But there was the question of *bread*; to that he was sensitive; he must cast about, and see what could be made of the situation. He reflects.

"I cannot dig;" my muscles have never been toughened for toil, nor trained to the cunning dexterity of the artisan. Digging, therefore, is out of the question. "To beg I am ashamed;" I have been bred a gentleman, and can never condescend to the humiliations of the mendicant. But I shall be ousted from my place in such discredit as will preclude the hope of honorable employment; I am turned off as being untrustworthy; of course, no other man will intrust me with his affairs; I am shut out from the only business I have been trained to. "What shall I do?" this was the supreme question. *What shall I do?* The key of the parable is in the answer of this question.

"I am resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship they may receive me into

their houses." *What he did* was with a view to *provide for himself in his extremity*. That was the *sole object*. Remember this; we shall have use for it.

But *what* did he do? He was still holding his place as steward; examination of his accounts had not yet taken place, but was set for an early day—perhaps to-morrow. There was no time to waste; measures must be promptly taken; it will soon be too late. "I am in extremity, and must make the best of my opportunity."

What *did* he do? This: *he made use of his lord's property for his own advantage*; he made fraudulent settlements with his lord's debtors, to their advantage, remitting fifty per cent. from one claim, twenty from another, and so on. He actually gave to one fifty measures of oil, and to another twenty measures of wheat, that was the property of his employer, with a view to lay them under obligation to him, so that they could not refuse him food and shelter in his extremity. We must suppose he knew his men. There are many men who are formally honest, but who, if the opportunity of a little sly rascality offers, will be only too glad of the chance. They have a good name, and intend to keep it, but if they can reap the fruits of a fraudulent transaction and shelter themselves, you may be sure they will do it. They will sell a horse liable to disease, and conceal the fact from the purchaser.

Or, are we to suppose that these men were unsuspecting—that they presumed the generous discount had been authorized by the proprietor? I think not, for in that case the steward would have ac-

quired no hold upon them. When they discovered the fraud they would have repudiated it and its author; at any rate, in that case, the obligation would have been to the lord, and not to the steward. But if we understand that they are represented as being in guilty complicity with the steward, the case is plain; then they were under an obligation of gratitude to him, and would *receive him into their houses*. Besides that, he would have a hold upon them as being implicated with him in the fraud; he—a desperate man, already infamous, and face to face with starvation—would have a sort of *black-mail* advantage of those respectable citizens; they must harbor and feed him as long as he might choose.

But the matter vital to the significance of the parable is the sagacity with which the steward availed himself of his brief opportunity to provide for himself with the means at his disposal. These means belonged to another, indeed; but they were in his hand, and he made the best possible use of them for his own advantage in his great extremity. We may revolt at the dishonesty; but, mark you, he was one of *the children of this world*, and the dishonesty goes to that side of the account, while the wisdom, the sagacity, of the stroke contains suggestion, at once, of example and rebuke, even to the children of light. He had secured an open door for himself, when he should be turned adrift; he had done it by very shrewd management; *had done wisely*—that is the point—and as he was one of the children of this world, was intended to be understood as being so, and in that particular, put in contrast with the

children of light, it was natural and necessary to the structure and design of the parable that his wisdom should appear in the strongest light of mere worldliness; and the strongest expression of mere worldliness is dishonesty. It is, therefore, eminently proper that this man's wisdom in evil should be made to rebuke our want of wisdom in that which is good.

"And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely." Children sometimes get the impression that it is our blessed Lord who is here said to have commended the unjust steward; and it is wonderful how hard it is to dislodge an impression once fixed in the mind, though it be in childhood. I remember well when this impression was upon my mind, and I revolted at the thought of the blessed Saviour "commending" this man in such an act, even though the commendation was only of his having *done wisely*. But I need not remind you that it was not our Lord, but the proprietor—the steward's lord—who is represented as commending him. This belongs to the narrative as Jesus relates it; it is the Lord Jesus who *says* "the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely"—that is, his employer complimented him upon his shrewdness, though he was himself victimized by it. I once met with a similar case—a man who had been very adroitly defrauded of a large amount by his partner in business. His remark was, "I can almost forgive the fellow for the consummate shrewdness of his management." So this defrauded employer complimented the wise craft of the man who, even

at *his* expense, took care to secure himself against starvation and beggary. We come now

II. TO THE GENERAL REMARK OF OUR LORD UPON THE NARRATIVE.

“For the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.” Those are wiser in evil than these in goodness. How completely upside down things must be in a world where this remark holds good! That world is ours. What a reproach is this upon us who name the name of Christ! But we deserve it.

Who are the children of *this world*? There can be no doubt; the designation is accurate and descriptive. “The children of this world.” They are they whose lives are given to the world; they are *of* the world; they live *for* the world; their eyes have never been opened upon aught else but this present world; they have had no vision of divine things; their plans are all laid for the present life; their hopes are bounded by its limit; darkness is on all beyond its boundary; they make no provision for that which lies beyond the grave; their loves are all here, and their ambitions; their aspirations know nothing higher than the fleeting honors of this present time. These are “the children of this world.”

Who, then, are “the children of light?” The children of light! They are those whose eyes have been couched so that now they see—they *see*; their vision is not of shadows, but of realities; not of a “vain show” that is to sink into the grave, not of a poor, pretentious vanity-fair, all tricked in cheap, garish finery, already fading—a dissolving view—

but of God, of life, of immortality; they are children of light; they see things as they are; they see how poor a bauble money is, taken in its customary uses and significance; they see what fame is—a mere puff; they see what pleasure is—the deceitful effervescence of a moment upon a most insipid cup; they see what the world is—“an empty show.”

But they see also *beyond*; they see life in its highest meaning; they see, “the beauties of holiness;” they see Sinai and Calvary; to them sin has become exceeding sinful, and a Saviour from sin chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely; pardon of sin, and being made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, by the blood of the everlasting covenant, is, in their eyes, the only true end of life. The account to be given in final judgment, the dread consequences of a life of impenitency and sin, and the glorious rewards of grace in eternity, are all disclosed in the light of a faithful revelation. In distant perspective, but in most real light, the gates of the celestial city appear; within are the house not made with hands, the river of the water of life, the sea of glass, and

———the everlasting gardens,

Where angels walk, and seraphs are the wardens.

There are the spirits of the just made perfect, removed from a world of want and pain, and established in holiness forever. All this is in the vision of the “children of light,” and they themselves are pressing on, hoping soon to be there; as they contemplate that goodly company, no wonder they sing:

I see a world of spirits bright,
 Who reap the pleasures there!
 They all are robed in spotless white,
 And conq'ring palms they bear.

'The *light* which brings these great facts into vision comes not from the sun, nor from the stars, but from the Sun of righteousness, the uncreated Source of light. Only the inward eye can see it; when that is incapable of vision, men see only by the light of this world, and are "children of this world." But there are those even here, walking among the shadows, to whom

Faith lends its realizing light,
 The clouds disperse, the shadows fly,
 Th' Invisible appears in sight,
 And God is seen by mortal eye.

The children of light are pilgrims and strangers here, and "declare plainly that they seek a country." They have fixed their hearts on that "better land." There is no death there; there is no sin, nor shame, nor poverty, nor fear, nor ignorance. None of the inhabitants of that country ever say, I am sick. There is no night there; there are no tears. On every cheek there is the glow of health, in every eye the light of truth and love. The air is tremulous with melody and redolent of the choicest odors. O happy, happy, happy world! Home of the purified, the children of light are seeking thee; by day and by night, in toil and tears, they are pressing on—seeking, in "the blood of the Lamb," that purity that will fit them for thy blessed scenes and holy companionships.

Surely, having made discovery of such a land, and having renounced the world to make it their home, they will omit no preparation for the way; they will be intent only on this one thing—to escape “the death that never dies,” and secure their mansion with the saints in glory. They will be the more earnest because they know the dangers of the way. By-paths every here and there lead off into eternal darkness; deceitful *ignes fatui* lead the unwary off upon hopeless pursuit and into despair; the fascinating voice of Pleasure sings a charming melody, out in the gardens of sin, to allure and destroy; snares are set thick on all sides for careless feet. Thousands of thoughtless travelers have wandered and perished; they started in high hope for “Jerusalem, the golden,” the “city of delights,” but they were thoughtless travelers; they took no precaution against delusions; they never studied the chart so that they might detect false guides; their eyes, turned for a moment from the celestial gates, have caught the false glow of the *ignis fatuus*; their feet have wandered; they are lost. They will never walk on the golden streets, nor hear the music, nor see the flash of the uncreated light on gates of pearl and walls of sapphire. .

Surely those that follow will take warning; with heaven in view, and the alternative of hell, they will take no risks. “Eternal vigilance” will be their watch-word. No thoughtless moment will be allowed to imperil eternity; no precaution will be omitted. The “chart of the way” will be the object of continual study. No rash, adventurous step

will depart from the narrow way, even at the slightest angle, for the pitfall may be at the point of first departure. No overweight of self will be suffered to embarrass progress. Who that seeks the City of Gold will run the risk of failure for a bag of gold? who will put the fine gold of heaven in jeopardy for the coarse metal of Mariposa?

Alas, alas! hear what the Lord saith, he who knoweth what is in man: "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." Can this be so? *can it be?* Thou ever-blessed Lord, what a testimony is this against thy own people! Alas, alas for us! it is the testimony of One who knows all things, and who cannot lie.

What a spectacle is this! a worldly man taking his measures more thoughtfully to make a hundred dollars in a trade than his Christian neighbor does to please God—giving his mind more intelligently to a question of safe investment for the paltry amount than his Christian neighbor does to assured possession of the "pearl of great price." But is it not a common spectacle?

"Wiser in their generation"—in their age. The world's people are wiser in their affairs, in what they propose to themselves as objects of life, than the people of God are in respect to the great object which they have set out to gain. They have chosen this world for their portion, and of *it* they have only a very little time—a brief age—their own generation. That they confine their plans and hopes to a stage so limited is *not wise*; in view of their im-

mortality, that they do so limit their aspirations to a moment, a mere point, to the pursuit of ends little in themselves, and so transitory in their use, is the extreme of folly. But on their little puppet stage they do, at least some of them, play their part with consummate skill; as merchants, as professional men, as farmers, or mechanics, or politicians, they study their parts well, and play them to admiration. It was *folly supreme* to choose earth instead of heaven, but since the choice has been made, they make the best of it; it was folly supreme to choose a day in preference to an eternity, but they take great pains to make the most of the little thing now that they have it. They give their whole mind to it, and manage it wisely.

The children of light contrast with them at both points; they have made the wise choice; they have taken God for their portion, and eternity for their inheritance. They have seen the contrast between the corruptible and the incorruptible, and have chosen that which will never fade away. But with what folly they endanger their title to it! Foolish, foolish, foolish men, who jeopard immortal treasures by a careless pursuit! It is incredible that, after the wisdom of the choice, there should be such folly of neglect in attending to the conditions of attaining it.

Tell me, if you had bestowed half the thought and care upon the conditions of growth and attainment in the Christian life that any successful merchant has upon the conditions of success in his business, what elevations of experience and charac-

ter would you not have reached erenow? what treasures would you not have had stored in heaven? in what knowledge of God would you not now be rejoicing? to what intimacies of faith and love he would have received you! You would have been admitted to the secret chambers of the King in the holy boldness of all-prevalent prayer. But you have been foolish, and to-day it is a question if you have even preserved your title to the divine inheritance.

Our gracious Lord has strewed the earth with opportunities for his people to increase their spiritual gains and augment the treasures of the world to come; but they seem actually too stupid to perceive them. What a contrast to the quick perception of his opportunity by the wicked steward! He made better use of a day for his bad schemes than many of us do of a life-time in our glorious pursuit.

What follows is naturally suggested by all this, and is necessary to bring out the scope of the parable. We proceed to examine the succeeding verses, which contain

III. SEVERAL PARTICULAR APPLICATIONS OF THE PARABLE.

The first application is contained in the ninth verse: "And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations."

Some explication of this verse is necessary. Many ingenuous minds have been embarrassed at two points in it: the phrase "mammon of unrighteousness" seems obscure, and the direction to make friends of

the mammon of unrighteousness has been a puzzle, probably, to all young readers.

The word *mammon* is from the Chaldee language, and simply means *money*. I have already said that I use money as the equivalent of property; I do not mean money, simply, but all that money represents, also; and this is the meaning of the word *mammon*—no more, no less. But why is it called “the mammon of unrighteousness?” Is money evil in itself? No, unquestionably. But does not the apostle say that money is the root of all evil? No; he says no such thing; what he does say is that “the *love* of money is the root of all evil,” and there can be no doubt that that is so. Money is not corrupt; but its presence is often the occasion of bringing out all the multiform evil of human nature; it is the *manimon* of unrighteousness, because unrighteousness comes to the surface through it more than through any other channel; at every point at which men touch it sin shows its hateful head; it is the occasion of strong temptation in every relation of men to it; in acquiring it there is temptation to lying, double-dealing, and fraud—and how often does the temptation prevail! in investing there is the temptation to covetous hoarding, and in spending there is the temptation to sensual gratification. There is no debauchery, no gratification of lust, that it will not procure; it may be sanctified to holiest uses, but it may also be prostituted to every basest use. If men were all holy, money would only serve the noblest ends; but, because depraved propensities are prevalent in human society, unrighteousness is the prev-

alent expression of it. There is, therefore, a certain great truth contained in this designation of it—the mammon of unrighteousness.

But making friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, who shall receive us into everlasting habitations—how is that? To be short, the meaning is, simply, that we are directed to use money in such a way as to make friends who will receive us into heaven. This is the plain and exact meaning of the place. But we shall come upon this point again.

By a little thoughtful attention to this ninth verse you will see that it is a comprehensive and compendious *résumé* of the whole narrative. Perhaps few readers see this, for the reference to each particular part of the narrative is not explicit; but where the reference is not formal it is clearly implied. Much of the most precious meaning of the sacred text lies just below the surface, and is missed entirely in a hurried perusal. Such is the fact in this instance. But let us proceed to examine it.

“And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness.” What is implied in this?

The unjust steward had made use of his employer's property to make friends for himself: “I am resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses;” and what he *did* was to use his lord's property for that purpose. This is what *he said* he would do, and what he *did do*; and our Lord adds, “*I say to you*, Make to yourselves friends” by the use of money. The parallel was in his mind, and is all suggested,

though not stated at length—as if he had said, “*You, too, are stewards; you, too, have the property of another in your hands, with opportunity to use it to your own highest advantage, and I charge you to make the most of your opportunity.*”

This passage involves the whole question of our relation to property. The rich man of the parable represents God. The property was the rich man's, not the steward's; he was only intrusted with the management of it so long as his lord might be pleased to employ him. So God is the Proprietor of all things. No man *owns* property in any real sense of the word. An individual has in his control a certain amount of what makes up this whole world, but it is not his; God is the owner, and has, in his providence, only put this man in charge for a little while; he may say he accumulated it, and got it in possession by his own labor, but that does not alter the case at all. When a steward took charge of an estate, and managed the business with great energy and sagacity, it would increase greatly; perhaps in twenty years it would increase tenfold. What if this steward should begin to say, This is my property; *I* made it? No; he was entitled to nothing above his stipulated wages; all the accumulation is as much the master's as the original capital. The steward has had his wages all along, punctually, so that his employer is quit of all obligation to him; he has acquired no shadow of title to the estate which has accumulated upon the original capital under his hand.

The earth was put in charge of man by the Cre-

ator, and he went to work on it; but God did not alienate the title; he still holds that. The crude conditions of nature constituted the property of the estate when the Infinite Proprietor placed it in the hands of his steward. With brain and muscle man set himself to work to improve the property, and he *has* improved it; out of the earth he has wrought many specimens of art and commodities of life; he has organized society, introduced commerce, and created civilization; out of the crude conditions of nature he has evolved commercial values. The value of the estate is greatly enhanced, but the rights of proprietorship are not affected. "The earth is [still] the Lord's, and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein." God furnished the capital; the soil, the atmosphere, the water, the dews, and clouds, the sunshine—all are his; we are stewards, and each one has had his wages all along; the estate has never changed hands. The capital has been productive in one man's hand until it is worth five hundred dollars; another is in charge of a hundred millions. But as to the title, it is still in God; he employs this man only as a steward, and only for so long as may please him; he never employs any *one* for very long, some only for the briefest service.

As respects other men, we may assert our possession; but in our relation to God, we can claim nothing but the wages he gives us day by day; and let it be deeply engraven upon our hearts that our employment is not for always, is not for long; that we are employed at the will of our great Master, and he will dismiss us when it may please him.

But the steward in the parable fell under suspicion of wasting his lord's goods; he was not scrupulous with that which was in trust with him, but spent it in his own pleasures; he had his wages—liberal enough, no doubt—but that did not content him; he must also spend what belonged to the master.

Are not *we*, too, under suspicion of wasting our Lord's goods? Are we content with what we may fairly take as wages? Do not we make heavy inroads into the estate, using it for our own pleasures as if it were our own proper possession?

Our Lord has not made specific stipulation with us as to the amount of wages; the steward is no menial, with set tasks, but has large discretion; God takes us on very generous terms; he even trusts our fidelity and discretion as to amount of wages; but we are to give account of all to him; he leaves us to judge of the amount that is to be expended on ourselves and our families; but it is to be determined in the light of the great fact that all belongs to him. The great majority of men are poor, and earn little more than will suffice for comfortable subsistence; some have scarcely any margin; but even they are stewards, and must give account to God of all the little they get. Many have something over a comfortable competency; a few have large wealth.

Beyond question, the first duty of every man is to provide for his own household. In this, too, he is God's steward, and must be guided by his will. But are we not under just suspicion of wasting the Lord's goods in our household expenses? Is not money laid out on our children in a way to foster pride, and

vanity, and sin? Do we think of honoring God with our substance as we use it in our families? Do we not rear our children in pleasures instead of piety?

Those who have thousands—many of them, at least—appropriate but a niggardly dole to charity and religion; even the very poor spend more, perhaps, on needless indulgences than they do to aid those in still deeper penury. Who is there that has used this world as not abusing it? Who of us all can clear himself of the charge of having wasted the goods intrusted to us?

We, too, are notified that we shall be called to account for all that is in our hands; a solemn and most thorough investigation is to be made; every item of our administration will be looked into with rigid scrutiny.

Still farther the parallel holds; for we have been notified that the stewardship will be taken away from us; all these goods of our Master will be removed from our hands at death; *that* will end the stewardship.

Then, when we are turned out of the stewardship, where shall we go? what shall we do? Have we made any provision? have we any thing laid up against that day? or, have we been going on without reference to the future, with no sagacious forecast of eternal needs? O the thought of going into that world unprovided, and with no friend to receive us!

The steward in the parable, in the brief interval after notice was given him, by the use of his mas-

ter's property, made friends who would receive him into their houses; so we are enjoined by our Lord to use the money we hold as stewards of God to make friends who will receive us at death into "everlasting habitations," with this difference, that such a use of his goods by us is with the knowledge and approbation of our employer; it is the use of his goods for his own ends, and, at the same time, to our highest advantage.

But is this so? Can we use money in such a way as to make friends for ourselves who will receive us after death? If this text means any thing, it means just that. I confess I was startled when I first got the vision of this truth—but why? Is it unreasonable? Take a case.

When I took charge of a certain Church—I will not name it—as was my custom, I hastened to find all my members, and to know them personally, especially the poor. I found one—a widow in humble circumstances, whose youngest child was nearly grown up; she told me her story. Fifteen years before she had been bereft of her husband, who was a mechanic, and left her with a helpless family and without means of support. Where bread was to come from she did not see. But she had one friend who never failed her: her class-leader was a man of wealth; he kept himself informed as to her necessities; took pains to get her employment; got situations for her sons, as they grew up, in places where they would be under good influences; and, whenever the pinch came, and it was necessary, he sent fuel and provisions—always doing what he

could first to put her in a way of helping herself, that she might not feel dependent. This went on for years, until her sons were able to support her. He had never failed her; he had been a friend indeed—pure, and generous, and noble.

During the first year of my pastoral term she died. Her old friend was there with me under the lowly roof. Her purity, her piety, and her sorrows, had interested him in her, and he felt that he had lost a friend; his tears were silent, but came from deep fountains. He closed her eyes reverently with his own hand, and taking two pieces of silver coin from his pocket, laid them on the lids. He was with the children at the open grave, and wept almost as profusely as they when the clods fell and the officiating minister pronounced the words, "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust."

A few months later I saw *him* die; it was a glorious death—rather, it was a glorious triumph over death. It was in the morning; the sun was just sweeping up from the horizon; Nature was in her most resplendent attire. It seemed as if heaven had lent something of its radiance to the scene. All at once his eye flamed with a new light, his spirit swept up through the golden gates of the morning, and left his face all beautiful with smiles that lingered still upon it when he was borne away to the grave.

Tell me, did not that glorified saint whose children he had fed, and who had been a year in heaven before him, receive him with celestial friendship to the everlasting habitations?

It is said that there is a tombstone in the cemetery at Florence, in Italy, bearing this inscription: "Here lies Estella, who has gone to heaven to enter upon the enjoyment of an estate of fifty thousand florins which she transported to that world before herself—in charitable deeds." Why not? what is there unreasonable in that?

We are all saved by *grace*; no mere acts of charity can put away sin, or merit the favor of God. Yet is it God's gracious will that his people, saved through the blood of the Lamb, shall reap the full harvest of their pious deeds in eternity.

It is no mere thoughtless scattering of money that will open heaven; but you may depend upon it, when we have as faithful stewards of God used his goods in aiding his poor, we shall reap the fruit of it in celestial friendships, and in the everlasting habitations.

I knew of a pious gentleman some years ago, a member of the Presbyterian Church, a merchant of not very large means, who made a rule of finding out some interior neighborhood where there was no Church and no Sunday-school, and contributing every year fifty dollars to outfit and organize a Sunday-school. My information was that several Churches had grown up from these *nuclei*, and some hundreds of souls had been converted. Will not all these be friends to receive him to the everlasting habitations? Why should we doubt it?

Money used in faith to build houses for God, to endow institutions of learning under Christian auspices, to send the gospel abroad to the ends of the

earth, must have the approbation of God himself. Is it too much to say that we may put ourselves into sympathy with Christ in his work by the faithful use of the means he has placed in our hands, and that then we may expect our Creator and Redeemer to welcome us to the fruit of our piety in the everlasting habitations?

I have already said that this parable was spoken to the disciples—to the Church. Let no wicked man imagine that he can purchase heaven with money; the very suggestion would be blasphemy. But I do say that a man who has first given himself up to God may lay up treasures in heaven by the pious use of property in a faithful stewardship. The enlightened Christian does not despise this world's goods; it is a trust put into his hands by his Maker: he must handle every dollar's worth with a conscience toward God; he must have an eye to God's will in making it, in investing it, in distributing it. Handling it in this spirit, it becomes the instrument of godly ends, and its use will glorify him from whom we have received it; its uses inure to the eternal enrichment of those who handle it in *faith*, and with a "conscience toward God."

Yes, a man may take his estate to heaven! To be sure, he can take no bonds nor title-deeds; they are too gross and heavy. Gold can never be ferried over the last river; we must leave it all behind. Bank-notes are too heavy; if you had a bond for millions printed on one piece of paper—the finest tissue paper—and all your estate reduced to that compendious expression, you would find it too gross

for transportation. Yet there is one way to carry your whole estate, and that with incalculably augmented value. The world was committed to man, and out of the crude conditions of nature he has, by his industry and art, evolved all commercial values, and now the Christian takes these coarse commercial values, puts them to charitable and pious uses, and thus *evolves from them celestial values*. In this form the actual value is augmented I know not how many fold, and it is portable even at the river of death. Thanks be to God that a hallowed radiance falls upon the coarsest and commonest things through the medium of faith! The toil and hope of the old alchemists were all to end in bitter and humiliating disappointment; stones will never be turned to gold in mortal hands; but the child of God knows the secrets of an alchemy that turns gold to values that will be current in the commerce of eternity.

Is this the plain teaching of our Divine Master? Yes; words can make it no plainer. Can money be invested to yield a revenue in heaven? Certainly. Do Christians believe it? If they believe the Son of God, they do. How can we account for it, then, that thousands of dollars among Church-people go for luxury and folly, and only tens for charity and religion? Why will this godly man send his daughter to a dancing-school, and spend money to train her for perdition, when he might invest it in stocks that will be at a premium in heaven? Why will this Christian woman buy paltry diamonds with the money with which she might turn a starving

orphan's tears to jewels fit to decorate the crown of Jesus? Why is it that thousands go to rosewood furniture and fast horses, and only tens to Christian missions, where it would be transmuted into coin for the exchange of glory? Why is it? Let the Saviour answer: "For the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." O the folly that lets slip such opportunities! O the folly that flatters the vanity of children with money, and cultivates them for hell, instead of using it to train them to charity and faith, and fit them for the blessedness of heaven!

Let it be noted that this parable is not an appeal to benevolent feeling. The Scriptures are full of such appeals; but this is not one of them. God does expect his people to come up to the sublime elevation of a pure benevolence. Unquestionably, the noblest motive of good deeds is found in unselfishness. But our Maker brings all proper motives to bear in inciting us to good works; among others, he appeals to our self-love. Self-love is not necessarily selfishness; selfishness is the evil form of self-love. The man who so loves himself as to disregard the just claim of others is selfish. God expects us to love ourselves. The highest standard of moral purity, on the manward side, is to love your neighbor *as yourself*; you are expected to love yourself; otherwise, that could not be put as the standard of your love to your neighbor. This self-love is a proper motive—not the highest, it may be, but good and worthy. Moses was actuated by it when he forsook Egypt; he had respect unto the recompense of the

reward; Paul was actuated by it when he looked for the "crown of righteousness;" even our blessed Lord, *for the joy that was set before him*, endured the cross; every man who plants corn that he may have food is actuated by it. This is the motive that is appealed to in the parable. Lay out your money in a manner *most profitable for yourself*; that is the argument. *Do wisely*; use your money prudently, with a view to make the most of it for yourselves. The time will come, and soon, when ye shall fail—when you shall die—when your stewardship shall end. You have it in your power now to use the estate that is in your hands so as to make friends—friends of God's poor—ay, to make a Friend of God himself, who shall receive you into the everlasting habitations. What other investment can you make that will yield like that? None—none; the best earthly values are *nothing* in the comparison. If you love *yourself* intelligently, you will so use your money as to get it back hereafter. The best earthly investments may fail you at any time, must fail you at death; the wages of the stewardship will end then; *now*, while it is in your hand, use this estate with a view to the after-time—the time when you shall have it in hand no longer; *do not sow to the flesh with it*, for then it will perish with the using. From this sowing to the flesh there can be no harvest but corruption; for all flesh is corruptible—death ends it. *But even with money you may sow to the Spirit*; you may put it to spiritual uses; you may make it plow in God's field, and then you shall reap the harvest in everlasting life.

Remember, this parable is simply an appeal to us

on our own behalf; it urges us to *do the best for ourselves*. Surely, if we see eternal things in a clear light, the appeal will not be in vain.

I cannot dismiss this part of the subject without another remark: This parable is not intended solely for the class of men whom we call *rich*; the poorest have an interest. He must be the merest pauper who cannot do some little good with money; yet it has a larger significance in the case of those who have large means. The statements of our Lord, with respect to rich men, are actually startling. The thirst for wealth is fatal. "They that will be rich"—who set their hearts on it—"fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition." Many of this class—they who will be rich—never get their desire, and perish on account of that which they never get.

Indeed, it is true that the mere fact of possessing wealth is fraught with fearful peril. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God;" it is not *impossible*, for with God all things are possible. Our Lord clearly intends us to understand that it is barely "possible." In fact, there are few persons of great wealth who show signs of earnest piety and consecration to God. Wealth fosters pride; it puts families into social relations which bring in the world upon them like a flood; with money in abundance, it is so easy to gratify every appetite and lust. A man's riches are just so much of *this world* as he has in his control; with *so much*

of the world in his possession, how can he disengage his heart from it? and "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." O "how hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!"

I say it deliberately, and with profound conviction, I am thankful to God that I am a poor man; a thousand times have I felt a profound sense of gratitude to God that my father was a poor man. I think it not unlikely that if in my youth I had had money to spend freely, I should have gone to destruction.

But some rich men are saved, thank God! and when a man of wealth does keep himself in the love of God, and order his house according to the simplicity of the gospel, he is almost sure to be a man of very pronounced piety; he has had to resist the world at so many points, and against such strenuous attacks, that he has acquired a fine tone of spiritual muscle; he has had to stand against the insidious and persistent approaches and importunities of a fashionable and godless society, with such strength as to bring out all that is in him.

The law of compensation is a beautiful one, and holds, I believe, everywhere; we find it here: the *hazards* of wealth are compensated by its *opportunities*. What hosts of friends a Christian who is rich has the opportunity of making! If he has "done wisely," he will find the bank on the other side of the river lined with them, and a deafening clamor of welcome will greet him as he ascends, dripping from the cold flood.

“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.” A good foundation—that is, a good deposit. Read 1 Tim. vi. 6–19.

The second application which our Lord makes of this parable is contained in the tenth, eleventh and twelfth verses: “He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own.”

The sum of this is: *Money gives the test of character. What a man is, is ascertained in his conduct with respect to property.*

Every thing that makes up the world is concentrated in money. It represents all values; it will buy every thing; it stands for every thing. The whole question of character hinges upon the relative hold which God and the world have upon us, and as the world comes into concentrated expression in money, *just there* is the test. God has trusted us with more or less of it, and has put in our way greater or less opportunity of acquiring it. The use of it according to his will, on the one hand, or in disregard of his will, for the gratification of our own

desires, on the other, will determine the whole matter. If a man is a bad man, his relation to money will bring it out; he will *make money* by wrongdoing, more or less pronounced; or he will *hoard it* covetously, or he will *spend it* according to the dictates of pride and lust. If he is a good man, his relations to money will ascertain the fact; he will be scrupulous in acquiring it, will invest it with thoughtful reference to God's will, and spend it with a view to his Maker's approval. There is no rule as to *how much* may be used as capital; but he will consider of that in the light of such general principles and directions as he may find in the Bible; he will, in all things, recognize the fact that he is a *steward* only, and not the proprietor.

The *least of all the trusts that God has committed to us is money*. All spiritual treasures belong to a class of values infinitely higher; but he that is faithful in the least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much. *Money gives the test of character*; if ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon—the least of all the values God has intrusted you with, so small that it is no true wealth—who will commit to your trust the true riches, the things that appertain to eternal life? *Money gives the test of character*.

You have just taken a new servant into your employment; you know nothing of him; you intrust him with money to make purchases in small amounts. At first you give him only small pieces—nickels, dimes, postal currency. You are experimenting; you are *testing him*. You soon increase

the amount; he always returns the full amount of change; he shows every mark of candor and integrity; you never miss even the smallest amount. He has been with you ten years now, and has never deceived you; you say, "*I can trust John; I have tried him; I would not hesitate to put a thousand dollars in his hands.*" Years pass, and you cease to keep account of the money he handles, and you say, "I know this man; I would not hesitate to trust him with unestimated diamonds; his integrity is above temptation." But if at first you had lost a dime by him, now and then, it would have proved him to be of *bad character*; none of your diamonds would *he* have handled.

My brother, God has committed money to you, the thing of least value that he has; be sure that if you are unfaithful to him in handling that, it shows just simply that *you are unfaithful to him*. That is only the accident that has brought the fact of your unfaithfulness to the surface. You are *unfaithful*; you can never have the true riches; *that* is too precious to be committed to such hands.

How careful you are in handling another man's money! If it is your own, you feel that you can do as you please; if you spend it carelessly, and keep no account, that is your affair; but if it belongs to your neighbor, you must keep a strict account; you must be able to show how every five cents was disposed of, and that to his satisfaction. But, in fact, you never had a dime that was your own in all your life; the property of it is in your Maker, and if you are reckless of *his* rights, it betrays a character

which must inevitably preclude all hope of higher trusts and employments. You cannot afford to spend the smallest coin—not even the coppers—in a way you know to be displeasing to him; *you must be ready to account to him for all.*

“And if you have not been faithful in that which is another man’s, who shall give you that which is your own?”

You cannot claim your own from a man whose property you are wasting; he will hold what he has of *yours* in his possession to force you to fair dealing; and he will do right. We may say that the spiritual inheritance is, in a high sense, *our own*; it is the destiny we were created for. But we forfeit it by false dealing with God in what is his. What gems do we exchange for brass! We relinquish crowns for baubles, the birthright of eternity for a mess of pottage. It is a sad business to make free with our Maker’s *gold*, to pocket it and squander it, so that we can give no honest account of it, and thus forfeit our own *diamonds*.

The third application is in the thirteenth verse: “No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”

God will have no partnership with money in our allegiance to him. If our hearts are given to money they are not given to God. The mercenary man is not a Christian, however he may deceive himself; the heart that is given to this world is alienated from God; he is a jealous God, and will occupy no

divided throne. There is no more deadly sin than cupidity; there is nothing that hardens the heart like it; it indurates a man against every call of humanity and every voice of God.

It is believed by many godly men that covetousness is the great sin of the Church. There can be no doubt of its wide-spread prevalence. But there is no other sin so difficult to deal with. It lurks in the most unexpected places; it puts on the most perfect disguises. It is impossible to judge a man with confidence in this matter; if he says, "I must increase my capital because my business opportunities are extending, and I have consecrated all to God," you cannot call his candor in question; if he says, "You do not know my business; no man knows it but myself; I must be just before I am generous; you do not know the relation of my debts to my capital; my first duty is to my creditors," you cannot gainsay a word of it; or, if he shall say, "My family is large, and necessarily very expensive; my children must be educated; a man must first take care of his own, and especially those of his own household," you cannot find fault with it. In all these cases he *may* be governed by the most conscientious regard for God's will in the use of his means. But he *may*, also, be *deceiving himself*; it may be that his own covetous heart is framing plausible but false excuses; there is inward monition with uneasiness; conscience and good sense alike upbraid him; there is a struggle between his conscience toward God and his love of gold, but the love of gold has the best of it. He knows that in his case his ex-

cuses are *mere* excuses, but he voluntarily turns away from his own convictions, tries to impose upon himself, does it in a measure, and the love of gold prevails. *He serves mammon; he does not serve God.* He must serve God, and make his gold serve God, or else he serves gold.

"COVETOUSNESS IS IDOLATRY;" and the word of the Lord is explicit upon this point—that "*no covetous man who is an idolater can inherit the kingdom of God.*" The use of money must be held actually subject to the claim of Christ. *

YE CANNOT SERVE GOD AND MAMMON.

Here the parable and its applications end. We have gone through both the narrative and the doctrine of it; but an incident followed this discourse of our Lord which is very striking and significant: his auditors were not all well pleased with it; there were some who criticised it with severity; it was new to them, and as distasteful as it was new.

"And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things, and they derided him." They not only criticised the doctrine, but derided the Author of it; this view of proprietorship and property, and of the uses of property, revolted them. They were covetous, and *derided him*—literally turned up their noses at him; they treated both his doctrine and him with contemptuous disdain.

There may be some who hear me to-day who are covetous. *I* do not expect to be derided—at least, not to my face. You will not turn up your nose at me—you are too well-mannered for that; but, nevertheless, you will give this Sermon the go-by,

as teaching a preposterous doctrine about money. But, remember, it is the *Lord's* doctrine, and not *mine*. If this passage means any thing, it means just what I have repeated to you this day; if you discredit it, you discredit the Master, not me; if you trifle with it, you trifle with the WORD OF GOD.

Christ and the Church.

SERMON XI.

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the Saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives, as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself: and the wife see that she reverence her husband.” Eph. v. 22-33.

I HAVE announced this text not with the purpose of delivering a homily on the duties of husbands and wives, nor, indeed, of treating of the relation of

husband and wife, except as it bears upon the main purpose of the apostle in the passage; he uses it to illustrate the relation between Christ and the Church, and it is this aspect of it that I shall present.

Several of the domestic relations are used in Holy Scripture to illustrate the relation of God's people to him. We are "servants;" God has the absolute right and authority of a Master, and we are under the corresponding obligation of absolute obedience. But we are in a relation higher than that of mere servants; with the obligation of the servant, we are in the more endearing relation of children; we have the adoption of sons. These relations are predicated of the individual Christian.

But there is another one of the domestic relations—the dearest of all—which illustrates the relation of the people of God, collectively—the Church—to our Lord Jesus Christ; this is the relation of husband and wife. This illustration is given by the apostle in the text more largely than in any other one place.

The principal fact in the relation of the husband and wife is the closeness of the bond in which they are united; it amounts, in a very strong sense, to actual unity. "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." Our principal postulate, then, is this:

THE HUSBAND AND WIFE ARE ONE.

This is not mere poetry, or romance; it is most deeply true and real; nor is it a fact so recondite as

to be incapable of analysis. I propose to take a near view of it, to consider the elements of the unity, that we may see how singularly beautiful the unity of Christ and the Church is, and how deep the parallel with the marital relation lies; for there is the same *relation of unity between Christ and the Church*.

1. *The husband and wife are one in their interests.* Their fortunes are identical; the husband cannot be rich and the wife poor; no more can the reverse be true—the husband poor and the wife rich.

There is a tendency in modern legislation to create separate property-interests, especially in cases where the wife inherits property. The purpose of such legislation seems to be to secure the patrimony of the wife from being dissipated by a worthless or profligate husband. No doubt there are many cases of extreme hardship. Ladies reared in luxury, and inheriting property, are not unfrequently married to men whose misfortunes or vices waste all and reduce them to absolute want; yet I doubt not that, take the world over, womanhood is in its best estate where marriage is all that God ordained it to be. Legislation that looks to provide for exceptional cases is always of doubtful expediency.

The unity of the conjugal relation is the rock on which society reposes; whatever tends to weaken it tends to general disruption, and to the decay of public virtue. That the creation of separate property-rights does tend to weaken it there can be no doubt.

Marriage-contracts have the same tendency. I would marry no woman under a special contract with regard to property; *I will be every thing to a*

woman, or I will be *nothing* to her, in any special way. A woman that will not trust me absolutely, both as to my integrity and good sense, can never be my wife.

But even where there are separate interests created by law, if there is the real conjugal affection, it will amount to nothing in fact. If the woman trusts her husband, he will have his way about the property; and even if the formal legal reservation of rights is not removed, yet, so far as enjoyment of any actual advantage is concerned, he will enter into full participation of it all; if she owns a good house, and lives in it, he will live in it, too; all the fruits of wealth in domestic comfort and luxury are enjoyed by both alike; the one by whom the property comes will take especial pleasure in seeing the other enjoy it; they are, in fact, one in their interests.

Does this represent any thing as between Christ and his Church?

Let us see. We have it from St. Paul that Christ is constituted Head over all things. You will observe that it is not as he is divine—the Son of God—that he is Head over all things; but it is in his mediatorial office, as he is the God-man, that he is invested with the control of the universe; all nature is in his possession, as well as the spiritual realm. But it is not for his own behoof that this universal proprietorship is placed in his hands; he is made “Head over all things *for the Church*,” “he that overcometh shall inherit all things;” “all things are yours.” There cannot be any doubt that the affairs of nature are ordered with reference to the Church;

the resources of the universe are commanded by her exigences. We may not understand it now, but it is divinely true that *all* things are working together for good to them that love God.

Measure the earth; take an inventory of all its riches; estimate the treasures of its forests, its fields, its mines; fathom the ocean; make a catalogue of all its tribes, its corals, its pearls; stretch your line over all the reaches of solar space; pass through the empty abysses beyond to the region of the fixed stars; contemplate these amazing masses and magnitudes—these riches of nature; then estimate all spiritual grandeurs and forces which glorify nature with intelligence; behold it all—the magnificent dowry of the Bride of Christ!

2. *The husband and wife are one in reputation.* You can scarcely separate them in this respect; they rise or sink together. The reputation of a man's wife is as important to him as his own; indeed, it is, if possible, more so; he is, in fact, more sensitive to her good name than to his own; he may afford to have his own name bandied about, but not his wife's; that must not be trifled with; the highest conceivable indignity to him would be an insult to her—that is the one thing he cannot bear.

A disreputable woman drags her husband down, in spite of every thing. No man can command any respect if his wife is infamous; in fact, the most degraded character on earth, the one most despised, and in universal estimation the most contemptible and odious, is the conscious and consenting husband of a base woman. If a man's own name is to be kept

savory, his wife must be in the odor of chastity; his house is absolutely in her keeping.

On the other hand, a woman takes rank in society with her husband; she goes up or down in the social scale with him; if he is the most honored man in the community, she meets with deference in every circle on his account; if he is the Governor of the State, she is the honored object of every most delicate attention; if he is the President of the United States, she dispenses the hospitalities of the nation in the White House; if he is crowned king or emperor, she is at his side, distinguished equally with him in the imposing formalities and the homage of the hour, and the crown that is set on her head blazes with more abundant and costlier diamonds than his own; she is the participant of all his highest honors, nor can he endure that the recognition she receives should come short of that which he himself commands; what is done to her is done to him, and any failure of due regard for her must be received as a disparagement of himself. *Is not all this true also as between Christ and the Church?*

Christ is estimated in this world by the character of his people; the only real disparagement he suffers among men arises from the unholy lives of his avowed followers; his name is above every name—all-glorious—but ah! how often has it happened that those who bear it draggle it in the mire of reproach!

I have long since lost all concern about the attacks of infidels, no matter with what wit, and literary polish, or parade of learning; no weapon that

is raised against him shall prosper; but he may be wounded in the house of his friends, and often has been.

Soon after I had united with the Church I had an experience I am sure I can never forget. I was in the saddle, on the Lord's-day, on my way to a social meeting in the country. The aspects of the autumnal scenery are as distinct in my memory as if it had been only yesterday: the warm sun lay upon the mottled foliage, and there seemed the hush of a hallowed peace upon the face of nature. All at once the thought came to me, "I am in the Church, and it is in my power now, by my unholy living, to bring a blot on the Church, and to dishonor the Saviour." For a time the reflection seemed insupportable; it was almost more than I could bear. "The name of God," said the prophet, "is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you."

No doubt, many a time people of the world seek occasion against the followers of Christ, and judge them hastily and wrongfully; but, after all that is allowed for, there is wrong-doing enough in the Church to do deep injury to the Master's cause and name; and there is greater hinderance of religion in this than in all the malignity of its most virulent enemies.

But if the Lord is dishonored by the inconsistencies of his people—if he suffers reproach from false professors and weak disciples—it is true, also, that those who make up his true Church shall be partakers of his glory. "As I have overcome and am set down with my Father in his throne, if ye over-

come ye shall sit with me in my throne;" "if we suffer with him we shall also reign with him;" we shall "enter into the joy of our Lord;" in the day of his coronation the Bride shall be at his side, and shall receive the crown of life at his hand; the place of honor shall be hers, and she shall be radiant in the full, reflected splendors of her Lord.

At the beginning of my ministry I avoided some of Mr. Charles Wesley's most magnificent hymns—those that represented saints in glory as having a place above the angels; but, brethren, there can be nothing more certain. Saved men will be the highest order of intelligent beings in the universe. The nature in which the Son of God incarnated himself, the nature that he assumed to himself, cannot but be upon the highest plane of created being. Through this close relationship of the Son to man, those who accept him by faith are impregnated with life from God, so that they become "partakers of the divine nature;" ay, and when we see him we shall be *like him*, for we shall see him as he is; even our "vile bodies," when they are raised, "shall be fashioned like unto his glorious body." It is most deeply true that Christ and the Church are one in reputation; even in this life the reputation of his people is dear to him as his own; they are the "apple of his eye;" what is "done to one of the least of them is done to him." It is better that a man should have a millstone tied about his neck, and be cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones; so will he vindicate the dishonored name of his people that love him and confess him among men.

3. *The husband and wife are one in love.* One of the chief mysteries of life is the unity in love realized between two who are truly united in marriage. There is a profound sense in which they flow into each other. Common experiences bring about a common consciousness; they come, in the run of years, to think alike, to feel alike, to act alike, to have the same desires, and to be moved by a common will. They sometimes come, actually, to look alike; they enter largely into each other's life.

I was once at the house of a gentleman in the State of Mississippi when his wife died. He was a man of high culture, and deep and most delicate sensibilities. I attempted some words of condolence, but felt that my poor speech was almost an impertinence in the presence of such a grief. He saw my embarrassment. "Ah! sir," said he, "you know nothing about this; you have never looked upon the face of your dead wife. I feel as if death had struck his talons into one side of me and torn the half away, and left the ruptured muscles and torn nerves all quivering and exposed." I could well believe it; they were one in love; she had come to be almost a part of his own conscious being.

Is it so between Christ and the Church? Read the seventeenth chapter of the Gospel according to St. John. What a depth and mystery of love is there! "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word: that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And

the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." *There* is the consciousness of unity in love! He is the Vine, and his people are the branches; he is the Head, and they are the body—the members. So close and real is the unity of Christ and the Church.

4. *The husband and wife reappear, united, in their children.* Did it ever occur to you that the maternity of the children of God is in the Church? Zion travails and brings forth sons and daughters to God. The chief instrumentality in the conversion of men is the word of God, and the word becomes effectual to this end through the ministry of the Church, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. The vital power is of God, but it becomes operative through the Church. It is the Church that preserves the written word in its integrity, and so maintains the authoritative standard of doctrine. But, chiefly, as the word is ministered by the living voice, and in the ordinances of God's house, with prayer, does it lead men to an actual experience of grace. The part the Church performs in the salvation of men is not formal and official merely, but real and vital; so much so, that it is *only* through the Church that men are brought to God. But for the agency of the Church the word of God, and all knowledge of Christ, must have perished out of the world long ago; in that case, the work of salvation must have come to an end.

If the ritualists exalt the Church unduly, as no doubt they do, there is, perhaps, a tendency on the other hand to undervalue it. Ecclesiastical mechanism and manipulation can save no man; sacramentarianism is a most fatal delusion. Yet it is through the faith and witnessing power of the Church, in its ministers and members, that the Holy Spirit works in conviction and conversion. *Yes, it is true that the maternity of the children of God is in the Church.*

The father and mother are blended in their children; the blood of both flows in the same veins. The features very often show a striking likeness of both parents; there may be seen the general contour of the one, with the color of hair and eyes, and the complexion of the other; there may be the mental traits of the one, with the temperament of the other. In the subtle and indefinable lines that give expression, and the light that comes and goes in the countenance, with varying moods, the two are most delicately yet palpably mingled. How deftly has the Creator wrought in this divinest work of art, the human countenance, to bring out the inner spiritual light in the facial lines and angles! By what dexterous, vital touches—by what inward, intimate blending at the very sources of life—are these undefined, inexplicable subtleties of finish in lip and eye wrought from two into one, as if most attenuate star-beams had been tangled so that tints of both should show, the one predominating here, the other there, in unpremeditated harmony!

The children of God take certain traits and a cer-

tain expression from the Church through whose agency they have been brought to the knowledge of Christ. Perhaps it is scarcely too much to say that every Christian has, more or less strongly marked, a certain type of spiritual character, which he received from the Church in which he was born into the kingdom of God. It is a true divine life into which he has been born—a life he has from the actual fatherhood and vital presence of God; but there is a maternal relation to it in some particular Church, through the agency of which he was brought under the saving influences of the Spirit. From this maternal side, detracting nothing from the genuineness of the divine power, there is a certain modification of spiritual character. Take any two or more Churches you know: there is a certain unity in each one, and each has its individual characteristics; and the converts coming into each almost inevitably take on the common type. With the same spiritual life from God, there are modifications of it due to the matrix from which it came into actual consciousness. I have been the pastor of different Churches in the same city—Churches that offered strong contrasts in many particulars; but, invariably, the new convert, coming into the one or the other, has grown up into the maternal expression. These differences between Churches are sometimes very important, sometimes less so; sometimes they are compatible with the highest states of grace, but in other instances they are just the difference between a robust and a feeble spiritual constitution; in some instances they touch the essential character

of the Church, in others they appear in particulars that are only incidental.

This vital relation of the Church to the spiritual character of its members is a fact of great practical moment, and must not be hurriedly dismissed; it is scarcely possible, indeed, to overestimate it; it is a question in which the reproductive efficiency of the Church is involved, and which concerns her responsibility to her risen Lord. There are Churches so enervated by worldliness, Churches in which there is such spiritual debility, that sinners are never awakened, souls are never converted, through their instrumentality. If any "join the Church," it is upon a feeble impulse, and seems to involve no real change of character; or, if new converts by any means come in, they soon fall into a dead, formal state, or, more frequently, backslide outright. Other Churches are so full of the Spirit of Christ that souls are converted ever at short intervals, and the converts are, with few exceptions, brought to a high state of religious enjoyment and activity.

I have two instances in my mind—one of each class—two Churches at opposite poles of religious character; one was in a deplorable condition of spiritual decay; there were no prayer-meetings, no class-meetings, though the house of worship was in a town of some size, and within easy reach of the larger portion of the members; what was worse, there were envies and jealousies among them, growing out of business rivalry and domestic feuds.

Strange to say, there was a revival in this inert and backslidden Church—a revival of great extent;

over one hundred persons applied for membership; it was in the time when the six-months' probation was in vogue. This revival, as you may well believe, was not indigenous; it was the fruit of special labors on the part of preachers from abroad, and even this wonderful work of God produced little apparent effect on the old members; the jealousies, and strifes, and backbitings, continued; still, there was, after the special revival occasion passed, no prayer-meeting, no class-meeting; there was only the stated preaching, at long intervals. There was no maternal consciousness in the Church; the "babes in Christ" had no care, no nursing; the result was, they perished by scores; there was no atmosphere of religion in the social life around them; they were but in their infancy, and, unfed, untended, there was not in them sufficient vitality to resist the chill temperature of worldliness to which they were perpetually exposed, and *they perished*—perished in virtual orphanage; they fell, one by one, into open sin, and, at the end of six months, only one in eight or nine of them, as I remember the case, were ready to be received into full connection; the others were in a more hopeless case than before their conversion.

The other instance I referred to was a Church in the country—a large Society, which, when I first knew it, was worshiping in a school-house; it was divided into three classes, each having a most exemplary and faithful leader. My immediate personal knowledge of this Church ran through a period of five years, and in that time there were one hundred and thirty-five accessions to it; I believe this was the

exact number. During this five years *there was not one instance of backsliding—not one!* Instances of incipient backsliding there were; one and another of the young converts became cold, fell into temptation and into sin; but they which were “spiritual soon restored such an one.” Those class-leaders—I am tempted to write their names; they *are* written in the book of life—whenever one of the young members began to wander, saw him, conversed with him, pleaded with him. O what prayers they did offer—full of sympathy, full of faith—prayers inspired by the Holy Spirit! Nor were the class-leaders alone; godly men and women by scores—neighbors, friends, and relatives of the erring one—would surround him with such a warmth of holy love and affectionate remonstrance that he was brought back by a sort of gentle violence, and it seemed impossible for him to wander. Not unfrequently the restored delinquent became more zealous and consistent than he had ever been; but if he had been in a community where there was no one to care for his soul, after the first slip he would have been clean gone forever.

In this community the predominant influence was in the Church; the leading citizens and a majority of the people were its members; the men of highest standing were the most simple-hearted and devout. A very favorable fact was that there were no lines of social discrimination and disparagement; the well-to-do families were not purse-proud; it was a rural population, and all were on an equal footing; there was no social ostracism, except in the case of two or three families who were known to be of de-

graded character. But this predominant Church influence was not an influence of mere *Churchism*; it did not, in the slightest degree, take on the character of Church pride; it was purely, sweetly Christian; it was a pronounced atmosphere of godliness, full of conscience and full of love; it was a very invigorating, bracing atmosphere to the spiritual constitution.

While I was the pastor, a case occurred that will serve to illustrate, in a very striking way, the matter of which I am now speaking. We were holding a protracted meeting. At one of the morning prayer-meetings a man whom I had never seen came in after the service had commenced; he was a miserable-looking object; his dress was of the coarsest material, very scanty and very much worn; he had on neither coat nor vest; he entered with a sort of stealthy movement, and slunk into the remotest part of the room, crouching down rather than seating himself. After the meeting closed I went with one of the class-leaders to dinner. As we rode along, he said, with much feeling, "Verily, I am guilty concerning my brother," and then proceeded to tell me about Aleck Smith. He had never been seen at church before; was a very dissipated man, addicted to low vices, and had been repeatedly under suspicion of petit larceny. "I felt," said he, "that I ought to speak to him on the subject of his salvation; the Spirit of God must be at work with him, or he would never have come to the meeting; but his character is so bad that I thought it would scarcely be worth while to approach him. Yet I know he is under conviction; his countenance shows it. My con-

science condemns me; I have done wrong; I have allowed an opportunity of doing good to pass. If God will forgive me for this I will see this man, if I have to go to his house." But at night Aleck was there again; he came in early, and got back into a corner. Throughout the service his head was bowed; he was weeping. No sooner was the call made for those who desired to seek God than my good brother, mindful of his pledge, and in earnest to save a soul, made his way to the miserable man, laid his hand upon his shoulder, and said, "Aleck, come and go to heaven with us." Can you question the result?

The next morning the poor, contrite penitent came and brought his family. The drooped figure of the wife walking up the road, in her faded, limp dress, and limber sun-bonnet, I can never forget. With the three daughters—the eldest verging toward young womanhood, shabby and shamefaced—these parents came; a group as woe-begone as could have been found in twenty miles. The long-suffering wife was but too glad to join company with her husband in the new life; and the susceptible children—of course they would follow.

At the end of the service my faithful class-leader, who had come with his family in a two-horse wagon, said, "Aleck, come bring your wife and children; get into my wagon, and go home with me to dinner." Ah! what a stroke of policy was that! But the man of God had no thought of policy—it was the pure prompting of love; a generous heart is the most consummate strategist in the service of our Master. Poor Smith! it was the first time any man

of respectability had invited him to dinner for many a year; and as for the children, they had never been inside of a decent house.

You ought to have seen that family three months later. What a transformation! It was life from the dead in more respects than one.

But there were sinister predictions enough about Smith. "These Methodists have taken a tough job this time; they'll have one backslider now, for certain; the fellow will be drunk in less than six weeks, and stealing somebody's pigs, too!" Perhaps the prophets of evil would have been glad to see the benevolent labors of God's people defeated; but the poor sinner that had sought shelter in the fold had fallen into good hands. If he had come into a fashionable and worldly Church, probably the worst predictions would have been realized; he would have found no efficient sympathy, no helping hand; and he needed the helping hand. Truly, he had reason to thank God, for the lines had fallen to him in pleasant places: these simple-hearted men said, one to another, "We must take care of Smith; we must keep him out of temptation; we must give him work at fair wages, to feed his family, and keep him from his former associations." "Yes," said one, "I want a hand for a few weeks; I will employ him immediately." From one to another he went among the brethren that year; the next he rented a little farm, and soon found, what he had never before dreamed of, that he, *even he*, had it in his power to put his family on a good footing with the respectable people of the neighborhood.

I never knew a more faithful man. He lived in good odor for some time; but I confess I trembled for him when I heard he had started for California: would he have strength enough to stand when separated from those friends who had held him up? But good news came from him on the plains; he was the only man in the train who had family-prayers in his tent, night and morning; no fatigue, no stress of camp duties, could induce him to omit it. Later still, good news came back from Smith—the best news of all; he had been released; from the foot of the Rocky Mountains he had gone to be with his Lord forever. He died praying for his family, and blessing and praising God—"a sinner saved by grace."

The child is to be pitied whose mother is too sickly, or too fashionable, for personal nursing, so that she must commit it to the mercies of a hired substitute; and doubly so if it has inherited a feeble or a diseased constitution. No hands can caress a child, or swathe it, like a mother's; no eye can beam upon it like hers; no voice can baptize its heart with such a wealth of tenderness; no other ear can be so quick to the faintest cry. None like her can bear with all its weaknesses; none on earth can so train its tongue to truth, and form its soul to honor.

It may seem strange that there should ever be a true spiritual life in a diseased state; but who can doubt that it is often so? Surely God has many children in this evil world who have inherited a scrofulous taint from the mother. Yes! and these are the ones who stand in greatest need of maternal

care, but never get it. A robust child may survive neglect, but those that are born half dead, born of a Church smitten with the plague of worldliness, are the very ones who must be put out to nurse. In such a Church the instinct of spiritual maternity is almost dead; but her little ones must have *some* attention, for decency's sake, if nothing else, and she has plenty of money; she will hire a trained nurse; so, with much higgling about salary and perquisites, and stipulation for vacation two months and a half in the hottest weather, the bargain is struck.

Henceforth the perfunctory attention of the well-dressed and scholarly pastor is all the care that spiritual infancy is to expect in this Church; two meals on Sunday, and one on Wednesday evening, are all it is to expect, and these—one part gospel, with three parts science and philosophy, and six parts rhetoric—are all the food it is to have. Can the scrofulous little creature survive? If so, what a sallow weakling it must be, wholly incapable of achievement in the work of God!

The Church needs, to-day, above all things, a development of spiritual muscle. There are battles to be fought—battles against vice and infidelity; the Church wants sons who can meet the enemy in the gate. There is hard work to be done; there is work for laymen as well as for ministers—work in the Lord's vineyard. No spiritual drivellers, half fed in a cushioned pew on Sunday, and starving their souls in vanity-fair all the week, can do this work, or fight these battles; only the best maternal heart can bring

up a race of spiritual men who may be able to do God's work in the world.

In order to reach a robust maturity, the child must have nutrition suited to its immature condition; strong meat is not for babes. There is much in the Bible that the babe in Christ cannot masticate, much that must be interpreted to it by the intelligence and heart of older Christians; many things that seem strange to the young Christian, and stagger his faith when they come to him filtered through the experience of those who have reached a healthy maturity in the Christian life, serve as nourishing food and an invigorating draught. I can never forget how much I owe to the few godly men and women I knew in the time of my own spiritual infancy. Religious conversations about the deep things of God, at the fireside and in the love-feast and class-meeting, reduced many things I had read in Scripture to a condition which made them nutritious to me; but they required this process. You may depend upon it, the *Church* must provide the food for her children, if they are to be fed; *the Church*, I say—the collective Church—and especially in her social life; she cannot depend on one man paid to do the work. The Church must live by the divine word; she must reduce it, feed on it, assimilate it; it must enter into her circulation and into her life, and then she must give it to her children from the warm secretions of her own breast; in the conscious warmth of a social life all vital with the presence of God, she must give them the sincere milk of the word; then you shall see how they will “grow thereby.”

But how will that Church stand in the presence of the Lord which lets his children perish of neglect? It is monstrous! it is unnatural! What wife could meet her husband, who had gone off to spend the night in pleasures, leaving the sick babe with a careless nurse, only to come home and find it dead? It perished for want of a mother's vigilance—perished while she was at the dance! Could she bear the reproaches of his eye and voice? There are Churches too worldly, too fond of ease, for any efficient, vital training of young converts, and they backslide by thousands for want of it. What a day will that be, when we stand before the dishonored Bridegroom to give an account for the children committed to us—the children who have perished while we were taking our ease, or sipping at the cup of worldly pleasures!

5. We have seen that the husband and wife are one in their interests, one in reputation, one in love, and that they reappear, united, in their children. This unity is not mere poetry; it is real, and our Lord traces it to the very history of the woman's creation. Adam was first formed, and the breath of life breathed into him; afterward, a deep sleep was caused to come upon him. In this condition he was subjected to the skillful surgery of the creative hand; God took out a rib, and of it fashioned the first woman. The opening eyes of the man were greeted with the fair face of woman: "She is bone of my bone!" he exclaimed; *and they two were, indeed, one flesh—the woman was created out of the side of the man.*

And was not the Church created out of the side of

Christ? Were not his hands and his feet pierced? was not his side opened? What agonies he suffered! It was not as when the innocent man slept that the woman might be taken from his side without pain; in full consciousness he suffered; the Church came forth from his body in deathly pain. The birth of the Church was, indeed, from deeper places of consciousness in Christ than were found in his physical nature. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." The dreadful surgery that took the Church out of his side drove the knife into his inmost soul. No wonder he should look upon the fruit of his pain with ineffable love! no wonder that the Church should look upon his torn body, and exclaim, "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones!" To such vital sources is the unity of the Church with Christ traced; the Church is an outgrowth of his person, the vital product of his pierced heart.

6. But in all unity that is not found in the mere unit, but in the correlation of parts making a whole, there must be a central part—a head—a part in which the unity is ascertained, and from which it proceeds. In the family the man is the head; "the husband is the head of the wife."

This relation of headship involves *authority*. Sarah called Abraham lord; in the divine ordination the husband rules. The fact of authority on one side involves the duty of obedience on the other. "Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as unto the Lord." But where the marital consciousness is fully realized on both sides, the matter of

authority and obedience is scarcely thought of; the man does not think of himself as ruling. There is such ready and happy adjustment in love that authority is scarcely conscious of itself; there is no tone of assertion or harshness in it. On the part of the wife, conformity to the husband's wishes is so free and spontaneous that it loses the character of mere subjection. If the father is the head of the house, the mother is the heart of it, and the heart often has its way, too; the head is well pleased to have it so, for the heart does not rule *over* the head, but *through* the head. Nothing more pleases a man whose wife is all he desires her to be—the ideal wife—than to give her her way on all proper occasions; he orders things very much in reference to her wishes.

The authority of Christ over the Church is absolute—he is King in Zion; he is the Supreme Head—but in the ideal Church there is no tone of harshness in this authority; hers is not the enforced submission of the slave, but the loving obedience of the wife; it is her pleasure to do his will; his approbation is her heaven; his frown would be her torment. And is he not pleased to give her her will, also, in many things? has he not encouraged her to come to him freely, and make all her desires known? does she not have her way in prayer? does he not listen to her with infinite tenderness? does she not—I mean the chaste spouse of Christ, in whom he is well pleased, not the wayward Church, tainted with illicit carnal loves—does she not, many times, have her way through him? does he not, in the greatness of

his love, order the household to her taste? It is impossible for us to exaggerate the love of Christ to a faithful Church; as for her, *service* is the law of her own being; it is not so much a law *over* her as a law *in* her; to do his will is an impulse rather than a service. In his infinite wisdom and strength authority belongs to him. It is a glorious thing to serve such a One; she feels it, and love and adoration consummate themselves in the rapture of an eager service.

What is the husband to the wife? He is the head, he is *every thing*; yes, where the wifely consciousness is full and strong, he *is* every thing; nothing has any value that displaces him; no joy is joy in which he does not participate, which he does not approve; she rejoices in his greater strength and force; the manly stature towering above her fills her with a sweet pride; the magisterial voice falls upon her like a baptism; she finds the complement of her being in him; her union with him fills out and spheres her own consciousness; without him she would be incomplete; her very existence consummates itself in him; her eye follows him as he goes to his affairs in the morning; her quick ear finds music in his distant footfall coming back to her; he is all the world to her; she can have no love that is not in harmony with his love; her life is bathed in his spirit.

Such, with infinite augmentation of the words, is Christ to the Church; he is *all in all*; he is the "chiefest among ten thousand," and "altogether lovely;" he is the Head, the Center, the Source of all

perfection; he is her *Life*; her being is consummated in him; without him she perishes; without him she is nothing; he is the supreme Magnet of her desire; his strength is the joy of her weakness; his wisdom is the light of her ignorance; the majesty of his brow is the triumph of her love; the kingly tone of his commands elevates and ennobles her obedience; he is her glory, and the crown of all her aspirations is her place in his love. Life were perdition without him; with him it is paradise.

7 But what is the wife to the husband? We have said that if the man is the head, the woman is the heart, of the domestic scene; nor is it too much to assert that the wife is as much to the husband as the husband is to the wife. She, too, is every thing to him; no more is she incomplete without him than he without her; she completes the sphere of his consciousness as he of hers; his existence is consummated in his relation to her.

No man's happiness is full-orbed until he looks upon the woman who is the elect of his heart, and calls her his *wife*. There she stands before him, with the vows of her love fresh upon her, his ideal woman, and all his own; he has chosen her out of all the world; she is his elect; and now she stands, in the queenly radiance of her beauty, the tremulous trill of her love-charged voice in his ear, pure as the pearly dew, cultivated, elegant, and beaming with intelligence and faith—*his wife*. The measure of his happiness is full—it overflows; the very atmosphere about him is radiant with the glow of his consummated joy.

If he is a man who deserves the name of a man, what will he not do for her? what toil will he not undergo to preserve her in health and beauty? what will not he encounter to shield her from reproach? Henceforth all his plans have *her* for their ultimate object; all his labors contemplate her; all his pleasures consummate themselves in her gratification; if he seeks wealth, it is that he may make his home such as satisfies his love for her; his mansion is projected for such architectural effect as may meet her taste; the grounds are laid off upon a plan that will gratify her; statuary, and painting, and elegant furniture, are but the frame, of which she is the living and half divine picture. The joys and agonies of maternity have glorified her in his eyes; she is the mother of his children; henceforth she is something sacred to him. Such is the wife to her husband.

And what is the Church to Christ? I speak with reverence. The truth of revelation exalts the Church in this particular view, to such a degree as overwhelms us with amazement; we can scarcely believe for joy. I speak but the truth of God's word when I say that

The Church is every thing to Christ. The apostle declares, in terms, that the Church is "the fullness of him that filleth all in all." How is this? how can it be that such a thing as this should be predicated of the Church? The fullness of Christ! What a mystery is this! yet how true!

Would not Christ, the God-man, be incomplete without the Church? Was it not simply that there might be a Church in the world that he became the

Anointed of God—the Christ? Can you imagine a Christ without a Church? The conception would be absurd. The very idea of a Christ requires the corresponding idea of a Church.

The Church is simply the outcome of the Incarnation—the natural and necessary product of it. The Advent and Atonement are without meaning, except as they look to the salvation of men, the creation of the Church. The garden and the cross find their solution in the Church; without it the sufferings of the divine Man would be monstrous—monstrous, because irrational; but with the Church in view as the product of them, they become the most glorious truth of human history, radiant and rational as a divine instance of beneficent self-sacrifice—self-sacrifice finding its only and sufficient compensation in the blessedness of its beneficiaries. I submit that beneficent self-sacrifice is the highest utterance of the divine Reason. The Christ-idea, therefore, which logically embraces the Church as the outcome and exponent of it, is the last and fullest word of the divine Reason. The logical reason is partial and special; it deals with ideas that are not ultimate, but require that which is ultimate to render them complete as ideas of the rational mind. Man explains nature, gross, and miserable, and mortal as he is; nature would be a great bauble but for him; in his conscious intelligence the uses of nature appear. But man himself requires to be explained; his heaven-scaling aspirations, overmastered by gravitation toward some black, infernal center of evil and despair, are an unsolved problem for the

rational mind. Incarnate Beneficence—suffering, saving, creating the Church, breaking the hellward fall of man, restoring to him the true center of gravity in the celestial sphere, and raising him to destinies which are the consummation of those higher intimations of his reason which come in faint pulses of light, like the play of distant sheet-lightning at midnight, in the most elevated regions of thought and hope, at the same time assuring him that these flashes of celestial radiance are the reflection of that which is deepest, truest, and most real in his own being, and give just ground of immortal hope—this incarnate Beneficence explains man as man explains nature. Indeed, this constitutes man a full exponent of nature; without it nature has but a half rational explanation, even in man. But the Church, the recipient of celestial benefactions, raised to a perfection and dignity that justify the sufferings of the incarnate One—a perfection in immortality in which he will find ample reward of his love and agony—this Church, the Bride of Christ—well might a universe be created to be the place of her abode, and supplied with all its most beautiful contrivances as the furniture of her dwelling. Christ is the Word, the *Logos*, the divine Reason, and the Church is the exponent of Christ; it is the product of the Incarnation, the fullness of him that filleth all in all; without it he would be a barren tree; it is the fruit in which he is glorified. I repeat it, with awe, yet not too great for joy, *The Church is every thing to Christ.*

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also

loved the Church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

What will not a husband do for the honor and welfare of his wife? What *has not* Christ done for the Church! "*He gave himself for it.*" This is the love that transcends all love. He gave himself! You know what that means. God coming into vital, personal unity with wretched humanity, in all its misery, is suggested to your thought; that dreadful panorama unrolls itself before your eyes—the manger, the garden, the cross, the tomb, the ignominious guard of Roman soldiers; he *gave himself* up to reproach—you think of all the enemies who hated and despised him in his life, of the betrayal, and of the mob that, with brutal and loud clamor, called for his blood; you think of his body on the cross, streaming with blood; you think of his soul, sorrowful unto death; you think of that most awful forsaking—"My God, my God, why hast *thou* forsaken me?" He gave himself *for the Church*; he *gave* his divinity, to become incarnate—he did not reserve that; he gave his incarnate life—he did not reserve that; HE GAVE HIMSELF.

All this he did for the Church, that he might wash it, and cleanse it, and that he might "present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."

A man is compensated a thousand-fold for all the

toil and exposure, and the contests and dangers, that he undergoes in prosecuting his affairs, if he sees as the result of it an elegant and well-provided home, the hearth-stone of which glows in the luster of *her presence*—his wife, the mother of his children, in intelligence and refinement, in chastity and love, in all wifely and maternal virtues—his *ideal woman*, and *HIS* in the full monopoly of conjugal election and appropriation. Whenever she is present to his eye, or even to his thought, he realizes that in her well-being, her purity and love, he has the largest reward for all he has done, or can do, for her.

So all that Jesus did and suffered had this end in view, that he might present the Church to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, holy and without blemish. In her he sees the travail of his soul, and is satisfied; he rejoiceth over her as a man rejoiceth over the wife of his youth; he exclaims, "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee." "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?" "The daughters saw her, and blessed her," even queens "praised her." "The king's daughter is all glorious within." He gave himself for her, that he might cleanse her, to be *all beautiful, all glorious within*, and now he espouses her to himself, as she stands before him, heavenly fair, arrayed in raiment of needle-work. Her garment is fine linen, radiant white, the righteousness of saints—the whitest drapery in heaven, for it is the righteousness of God revealed in his Son; no angel is so resplendent; no son of

the morning is so fair. Human nature, impregnated with divine purity through the blood of the incarnate One, is the highest in the scale of created being. The soul that opens itself to the Crucified by faith is vitalized by the touch of his Spirit, and so becomes, *in fact*, a child of God. To what measures of personal intelligence and power, to what destinies in achievement and blessedness, to what visions of God, to what deep, responsive consciousness of his love, to what luster of chaste beauty in his eyes, to what fitness for his presence, to what capacity of communion with him in actual reciprocity of thought and joy, the saved soul is to be raised, we may not now imagine; but these words come to us, overloaded with a meaning we must die to understand: "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall BE LIKE HIM." There shall be such an elevation of thought and feeling—thought and feeling so commensurate with the demand of his own nature—that we shall be ready for companionship with him, able to enter into his joy; ay, and in the presence of the Bride, also, will he find joy.

But our poor speech can aspire to nothing more than intimations—shadowy hints—of the glory the Church has and shall have in the glory of her Sovereign. Our imagination attempts these heavens with feeble wing; we see the stars, but to our sight they only glimmer; what massive worlds they are, and how magnificent, we must visit them to learn; yet we have some inspiring sense of their grandeur, even at this distance. So heaven only glimmers,

now, in the inaccessible depths of the unseen world; yet the glimmer raises in us unutterable hopes, and kindles ineffable desire. We shall live with the All-holy; we shall be his—his elect. O let us keep our garments unspotted from the world! How can the Church be so careless of her bridal-robe? how can she bear these earth-stained, these grimy, spots on the white ground, knowing how soon she is to enter into the pavilion of her Lord?

“Having this hope in us, let us purify ourselves, even as he is pure.”

To what extent, in actual life, does the Church realize this? Many there are, I cannot doubt, who are keeping themselves in the love of God and in the patient waiting for Christ; but are there not multitudes of members of the visible Church who are all unready for his coming?

Look upon this picture. There is a mansion, the home of an opulent family; the general aspect is that of massiveness and elegant airiness, combined in wonderful perfection of design; Corinthian columns of pure marble, resting on bases of massive and faultless scroll-work, and crowned with richest chiseling of acanthus-leaf, front and support the lofty portico; through large windows of plate-glass you see the deep coloring of luxurious curtains within; the background is an open, unbroken forest, in full foliage, the earth well covered with pure, grassy verdure; the grounds in front are a maze of squares, and angles, and circles, divided by walks and carriage-ways covered with pebble and edged with shells; the rarest shrubbery, with all diversities of

height and foliage, and in most tasteful distribution, relieved by flowers waving here and there, in endless variety of hue and odor, makes up a scene of beauty that almost rivals Eden; while ever at points of best advantage statuary from Italian chisels is disclosed in openings of the shrubbery.

Within the mansion what shall we see? Rose-wood everywhere, and marble-carved mantels, pure white; carpets the softest, of colors the most exquisitely blended and shaded, woven upon patterns wrought from the most cunning brain; and light shaded and tinged by window-drapery of gorgeous Oriental dyes, admitted just so as to give the aspect of luxury with a suggestion of romance and repose, and to bring out the coloring of the paintings upon the wall, every one of them by a great master.

A beautiful woman, in early maturity—a wife and mother—is the animating spirit of this scene of enchantment; and bright-eyed, soft-haired children flitting about, too happy to contain themselves, complete the picture. Mother and children under the roof, at the fireside, sheltered, supplied with plenty, surrounded by beauty, themselves most beautiful of all—is there aught on earth to equal it?

But this home, this abundance, this luxury, this thoughtful arrangement, this opulence, suggest another—the husband, the father. This is the result of his toil. What tension of brain and muscle there must have been! For twenty years the fruit of all his enterprises has been coming into this expression. Long before he made avowal of his love, in timid

hope, he labored, thinking only of *her*. Ever since her presence has hallowed his home all the wealth of his hand has been lavished upon the scene of which she is the central figure, as the wealth of his soul has been lavished upon her heart. No toil that would enhance the luxury of her home has been thought a hardship. The rigors of winter have been encountered as if they were nothing, for her sake; tropical heats have brought no pause; fierce tempests have been despised; the perils of long travel upon commercial enterprises have been encountered; even long, intolerable absences from her have been accepted—only for her sake. She has been the animating motive of all his most arduous enterprises. He would keep *her* in a condition such as would gratify her tastes and satisfy his own love—a condition worthy of her! She should be shielded so far as mortal arm could shield her. He will preserve her love, cost what it may. She is the mother of his children, and she shall be happy if any man can make any woman happy. It has been the joy of his life to create this exquisite home, because it was for *her* and for her children. Pain, and fatigue, and danger, have been welcome in this labor of love. The thought of his chaste wife at home in the midst of her children has ever been both the spur and the recompense of his endeavor. Recompense enough! The evenings, the mornings, the Sundays that he has been himself in the midst of the scene, have been marked as the white days of his calendar. Their very memory is happiness! His every thought is purity, and all his love is given to her.

He is off—far away—beyond the ocean—still under heavy tension of unflagging effort, *for her*. Beautiful women come and go about him; he scarcely thinks to admire them, for she, the supreme magnet of his heart, monopolizes him; his fidelity to her is as transparent as flint-glass and as pure as a diamond. Month after month, in the opposite hemisphere, he presses his successful traffic, and the fruit of it goes to that one *place*, *his home*. Still costlier luxuries shall constitute his home more worthy of *her*, the only woman that he ever loved—the beautiful, loving, chaste wife of his home and of his heart. Noble man! surely he would command the homage and fidelity of any woman in the world. This unselfish devotion, this transparent purity, must win an equal devotion. This man's wife! how *can* she be otherwise than noble and true? How impossible it is that she should trifle with his honor!

See her walking in these beautiful grounds, *beautified by him*; see her in the luxurious home provided by *his* labor. Every thing in her sight is eloquent of his thoughtful care, his single-hearted love. He is off toiling for her now, and she is here at her ease, with naught to do but to enjoy the fruit of his labor, to care for his children, and to long for his return. See her in his house, at her ease, enjoying his wealth; see her reclining on cushions which he sent home to her from Turkish factories only this very month. His children are in innocent, unconscious sleep in the next apartment. See her there, *receiving the impure caresses of a stranger!*

Think of it! think of it! Is it not monstrous? is it not inconceivable? Baseness is a feeble word for such a crime. To dishonor *him* under his own roof, with the breathing of the sleeping innocents—his children and hers—in her ear, it is unnatural!

When he comes home will not the calm purity of his loving eye smite her dead? Will not the thought of his dishonored love drive her mad, even in his absence, when the children meet her? Or is she so base and brazen that she can still eat his bread and live?

Tell me, you who have been redeemed by the blood of the Son of God; you for whom he has made the earth so beautiful; you for whom his harvests are gathered in in their season; you for whom he gave himself, to whom he has sent the Holy Spirit; you for whom he carries on the affairs of his mediatorial government; you to whom he devotes the infinite resources of his power and love—tell me, are your hearts true to him? Or have you not, in the midst of the earth which he has fitted up for you, overwhelming you with his bounties, the rich gifts of his providence, and under the sky in which he has hung innumerable love-lights for you, tokening to you his tender care, given your heart to gross carnal loves, forgetting and dishonoring him? Have you not taken the disgusting stranger to your heart? are you not earthly, sensual? are you not lovers of money? are you not lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God? have you not defiled the home he has builded for you?

How often has the Church debased herself, even

in the midst of her children! She has averted her face from her Lord and has smiled on rival claimants of her heart, and that with his bridal-gifts in her hand, with his ring upon her finger; named by his name, she has despised his poor; from his very table she has sauntered into the theater and the ball-room; with the wine of his sacrament fresh upon her lips, she has uttered falsehood in the market, for gain; she has become deaf to the charms of his voice in hot, unscrupulous chase of empty, corrupting honors. O she has corrupted herself with many lovers, and when he comes—the Lord whom she has so basely dishonored—how must she shrink from the rebuke of his pure face! how will the light of his eye pierce her heart!

How sweet and fragrant is the atmosphere of that home which is kept in the odor of purity by a chaste wife! No matter how protracted the absence of her husband, her instinctive purity preserves inviolate the sanctities of the place; the modest dignity of her spirit removes her utterly from temptation; no lustful dalliance dares attempt her hand; evil avoids the threshold; even in his absence her husband's name is another word for honor; no presence is allowed, no word is spoken, that would shame him if he were there.

Yes! and Christ has a Church on earth—a spiritual household—where the honor of his name is kept inviolate. His word, now that he is gone up on high, has all the authority of his presence; if he were here in bodily presence, he would not be more loved and honored; when he does come the second

time, with what rapture will she fly to meet him, and find her heaven in his presence! He, too, in her shall find his own eternal joy; by his blood and labor he has constituted and preserved her *a glorious Church*, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; she is *holy and without blemish*; he presents her to himself, "faultless before the presence of his glory," *in the beauties of holiness*. This is the beauty that feasts his eye, that satisfies his heart. The Bride stands before him; he has her heart inviolate in celestial purity; he looks upon her face, suffused with the blushes of an untainted love; she is his—created out of his side; she is his in all the multitude of her saved children, holy and without blemish, and he is satisfied; *he gave himself for this*, and IS SATISFIED; she meets the infinite demand of his love, and his great labor has its full reward.

I have seen a young man, the noble son of a noble sire, when he brought his bride home to his father's house; he had chosen her from among all the women in the world; he loved her with all the fullness of an uncorrupted heart; it was the mighty outgoing of a fresh, strong nature. She was fit to be the wife of such a man; she was as complete in her womanliness as he in his manliness; and now, at this supreme moment of her destiny, her whole nature, soul and body, had been fused into sensibility; her face was lit with the chaste warmth of bridal consciousness; her light, airy, elegant form was embodied gracefulness and poetry in every attitude, in every slightest movement; when she leaned upon her husband's arm, and looked up into his face, she

was the picture of rapture in repose. The son had the full approbation of his father; of all the women he knew, he would have chosen this one to be the wife of his first-born.

What a day was that when her husband brought her home to his father's house! what preparations had been made to receive her! The house had been renovated, from top to bottom; the premises had been in uproar for a week, making ready for the event; if it had been a queen that was coming, interest could not have been more intense; every thing on the place had turned to heart; every nerve tingled a delicious welcome to the new-comer.

The day arrives, *at last*, and the hour; the bridegroom has come, with his bride; the welcome would be clamorous, if it were not so deep; the feeling of the younger children and of the servants has a touch of awe in it.

The father receives her with quiet dignity, but the respectful kiss is the seal of purest affection, and the deep bass of his voice, slightly tremulous, gives her a daughter's quiet consciousness in his presence at once; she looks into his face, and sees the glow of his countenance; from that hour her heart is at peace under his roof. The younger children come hesitatingly about her chair, and timidly finger the fringes of her garments; if she looks at one with a smile, he can scarcely contain himself for an hour; a kiss upon the forehead is enough to put him into ecstasies for a week. With what sensitive eagerness they speak to her, in tremulous under-tone, calling her *sister*! The word never had such a meaning be-

fore, nor the syllables of it so sweet a sound; it is another word for tenderness and beauty. The very servants move about with unwonted activity and interest—for there were black domestics in the house, born and bred on the place; they have caught the infection of love, and interest, and joy; every thing the young mistress touches seems almost sacred to them; they sweep the carpet with greater care, because she is to tread upon it; the very stair-way seems different after she has tripped up and down it once; every thing seems different; a new expression is in every thing; the light is purer, and as the sunshine from the window lies upon the carpet you might imagine it to be the bright shadow of God's peace, that came into the house with the bride.

After night-fall she walks to and fro over the greensward, under the shade-trees and in the light of the full moon, leaning on the arm of her husband, and talking with him in low tones; the very moon looks purer, as it floats above her head, and the grass more brightly green after her robe has swept over it. There was never a joy so great or so diffusive in that house.

The day comes when the heavenly Bridegroom will bring his Bride home to the Father's house; he is there now, making ready—preparing a place for her before he comes again to bring her away. That will be the day of days, even in heaven; it has been looked to from the dawn of creation; angel-ministers have been engaged in preparation; God the Father looks upon the Bride with approval; the last earth-stain has been washed from her garments by the blood of

the Lamb; a vast concourse of the sons of immortality is coming to join the procession; the frame of nature throughout the universe is to be taken down and built anew, in more perfect forms of beauty and grandeur, in honor of the event; "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." Then shall he return with the risen and glorified Church; the gates of the celestial city are in sight; they are thrown open; the family of heaven are grouped and waiting; a new feeling of tenderness and interest deepens the sensibilities even of that world; the Church, redeemed with blood, is coming home with her Redeemer, radiant with his glory; nearest his person, and most fully in his likeness of all created things, she is the center of interest and in the place of honor; she was created from his side, and the glory of his nature is upon her brow; she enters, leaning on her Beloved; angels, quivering with delight, and eager to do her service, hover about her way; they will bear messages to and fro, swift as lightning; they will sweep the invisible dust of the gold pavement with their wings, before her white-shod feet shall pass; the celestial glory is heightened by the glow of her countenance, as she looks into the face of her Lord; her passing form is mirrored in the sea of glass; the princes and potentates of glory await her coming with their homage; she passes into the palace of the Great King, still leaning on her Lord; the Father smiles; she is *at home*; the Son takes the throne with the Father; the Bride is with him, throned at his side; all the

harps and voices of heaven break forth with a new song, and the music deepens, swells, and vibrates, till the very thrones tremble to the melody; the crown is brought forth—the crown of life; the triumphant hand of her Lord places it on her head; it is gemmed with diamonds, cut at ten thousand angles, every flaming facet flashing back and augmenting the celestial radiance; at the right hand of her King she sits, regnant in beauty, with the port of an empress and the heart of a bride, to reign with him forever; in the Father's house, like a child at home, she shall go in and out, diffusing beauty, and love, and blessedness.

The purposes of God are consummated: created being has reached its highest expression through the agony of the God-man; the Creator sees himself mirrored in the creature, and the glorified Church is the crown and joy of heaven. Even the angels come to a higher destiny in the household of the Bride; they find a deeper joy in her transcendent destiny, and through her find places nearer to the Lord.

Shall we be there, blood-washed, to sin no more? we, so weak, so polluted, now?

Yes, even *we* may have hope! But only the power of God can keep us against that day.

In Memoriam.

SERMON XII.*

“Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily, I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.” Luke xii. 35-38.

ALL character is based on personal relations; right and wrong are not found in any abstract conception. Obligation supposes two parties, to one of which something is due from the other. The very idea of *justice*, for instance, contemplates parties in vital relation to each other. There can be no

*This Sermon was delivered, in substance, in Selma, Ala., Dec. 27, 1874, in memory of the Hon. WILLIAM M. BYRD, deceased. The printed Sermon, however, differs a good deal from the original, which was extemporaneous. The difference is not in the analysis, for that remains unchanged; but my own participation in the bereavement was such as to disqualify

such thing as justice without a personal object, as well as a personal subject—one *to* whom justice is to be rendered, as well as one *from* whom it is due. The obligation of charity requires that there be some person in need of aid in actual relations with one who has it in his power to bestow the needed benefaction. You may possibly think of truth in an abstract view; but the obligation of truth-speaking brings two persons into sight, in such relation as to be able to communicate with each other. Only, therefore, where intelligent beings are in community—in actual relations with each other—can obligations exist, or character be formed.

In the light of Christian truth we discover that there is one great Personage to whom we are so related as that all character is determined by our relations to him. This exalted Person is the Lord Jesus Christ. His claim upon us is so comprehensive as to include all the possible forms of obligation that we may be under.

St. Paul characterizes himself as a servant—literally, *slave*—of Jesus Christ. If a man is a Christian, in any proper sense of the word, the one all-inclusive fact of his character is given in that statement; to say he is a servant of Jesus Christ is to give, in the sum, every thing that determines his moral *status*.

me, in large measure, for the duties of the hour. I will add that I have rarely known a man to whom I was so deeply attached as I was to Judge BYRD. I count it one of the privileges of my life that I enjoyed for two weeks, at different times, the hospitalities of his house. His conversation profited me in my personal experience; I felt nearer to God after I had been with him.

The text brings this fact to our attention in a most impressive manner, and at the same time awakens a most lively sense of the immediate personal attitude we stand in in the presence of our Lord. Let us proceed to formulate the truths involved.

I. *To be a servant of Christ is to meet, in its completeness, every obligation of life.*

No virtue can fall outside of this postulate; it covers the whole area of duty and goodness. The character that is the product of this *dictum* is round and full; nothing is left out that goes to make up the ideal virtue.

1. *His demand upon us, formally asserted, is supreme and exclusive.* He admits no participant, tolerates no rival; he presents himself as absolute Lord of our life, dominating us with an authority that controls all other relations and subordinates all other claims; he concentrates duty in the one fact of obligation to himself; all the most sacred obligations and the tenderest ties of life are put in complete abeyance; all bonds, filial, fraternal, conjugal, sink before the absolute supremacy of his name; no competition of father, mother, brother, sister, husband, wife, can be allowed; in comparison of the love he claims for himself all the affection of these subordinate relations must be as hatred; the absoluteness of his demand rises above the most touching exigences of domestic feeling. Discipleship must recognize the present, peremptory sovereignty of the Lord. The question of discipleship may not be postponed for a moment, and will suffer

no hesitating, half answer in a brief interval of leave-taking. "Let me first go bid them farewell which are at home at my house." "No man having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." No sensibilities, however pure or sacred, can be put "first" when the question of following him is up. So high, so engrossing is his right that all other rights, when they come into competition with him, are wrong; they may be never so pure and commanding in their proper assertion, but when they set up a claim as against him they become intolerable wickedness. Not even the hallowed rites of sepulture can be allowed so much as a momentary precedence of him. "Suffer me first to go and bury my father." "Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead."

Not only the fact of absolute supremacy, but the peremptory tone of its assertion, strikes us in these passages. They sound harsh, and from any other lips than his they would be revolting; but has not he the right? The shock which we experience from these startling words is necessary to arouse us from a stupid half-consciousness of the right of Lordship which the Son of God has over us. He must assert himself between husband and wife, even at the moment of supremest sensibility, and command us even from leave-taking; he must stand between father and son at the grave's mouth, a Master and Lord who has prerogative even there to summon the broken heart away from the most sacred of human duties. Our dead are under the roof; with crushed hearts we are preparing to follow them to

the grave and weep there; an inviolable silence honors the grief which all humanity has consecrated by an awe that stands aloof and gives up the time and place to sorrow; but the hush is violated by the sudden crash of a stern voice: "Come away—let the dead bury their dead—follow me." What sacrilege is this? My outraged heart must scorn a call like that at such a time. But no; I look up—*His* eye is upon me. "My Lord and my God," is it thou? Thou hast the right. Take me! take me! even though it be from the side of my unburied dead. I yield myself in unquestioning love and faith to thee.

2. *This supreme and exclusive demand rests on the nature and dignity of him who makes it.*

(1) *He is the Son of man.*

As a man his relation to humanity is singular. He is the "First-born among many brethren," our "Elder Brother." First-born, not in time, but in dignity—with the prerogatives of elder brotherhood, not by anterior birth, but by a higher nature. He alone of all the sons of men was born of a virgin, owing his being to the immediate creative act of God. Thus, by the very history of his birth, he has at once a common relation and a relation of superiority to all men. He is the Son, not of a man—any particular man—but of humanity; he came into being for the sake of humanity; he was divinely provided in the midst of the ages to meet the want and confront the enemies of our race. With the Fatherhood of God in his human as in his divine nature, he is removed so far from the

category of common genealogies and local relationships that he stands at the head and front in the ranks of men, and is the highest born and common Brother of us all. His birth is not from any single man, as the product of a procreative instinct, but is a divine response to the universal need of humanity for a new creation.

The human nature of the Lord is the product of the divine love toward man, moving toward a new creation and a new life. In him, first, the new life existed, and from him it flows out to the world. "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." "I am the vine, ye are the branches." "If a man abide not in me he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered." "This is the true God, and eternal life." "He that believeth hath life," and this "life is in his Son." Toward man, dead in sin, the Infinite Love yearned, and the issue of the holy impulse was the Seed of the woman, the Son of Mary, the man Christ Jesus, in whom was life, not for himself alone, but for all. In him humanity was impregnated, and the conditions were provided in which, through vital relations with him, all men might become recipient of the new divine vitality. So he is the product of the Divine Love, through the occasion of the human need, and is the "Son of man"—the Son of humanity.

Christ sustains a representative relation to mankind.

However strange it may seem to us that the vital interests of one person should be intrusted to another as a *representative*, we know not by our own

observation that such is the fact. The civil magistrate is the representative of the whole community, and whether the good citizen is to be secure in life and property depends on his faithful administration of the functions of his office. A rash or an ambitious ruler may involve a whole nation in the miseries and demoralization of war; a vicious and trifling father entails a low character and miserable condition upon his children. How much more may we believe that the first man was in a relation to his posterity which was, in all respects, vitally representative!

But he, our first representative, involved us in untold calamities, both moral and physical. The Infinite Beneficence provided the Son of Mary—God his Father—to be a second Representative, that he might be the Restorer and Redeemer, that he might counterwork the evils entailed upon us by the first man. *So he is the Son of man.*

(2) *He is the Son of God.* “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.” “In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” The person of Christ is truly divine; he is “God manifest in the flesh.” His human nature is the medium of his manifestation and the basis of a special relationship to man; through it he is in the relation to man not of Creator only, but of Redeemer, also; it is the point at which God connects himself with the fallen—the lowly form in which he seeks the lost. Not that God limits himself to the conditions of a human person-

ality; but he does connect himself vitally with this man, so that the human nature in him becomes the expression of the divine nature to us. There is a vital connection of the human with the divine; the Divine Being takes this human life into immediate personal union with himself, so that while the human nature remains intact and complete the Person is divine. The Son of Mary is the Son of God, and the incomprehensible Unit resultant from this union is a divine Person—*IS* GOD. All the power, and majesty, and glory of Godhead concenter in him; all the sovereignty and right of God are in him; he is “God over all, blessed for evermore.”

(3) *His relation to man appears in these two facts, that he is the Son of man, the Son of God.* He is not only the representative Son of man, having a common relation to all men, with a certain superiority and elder brotherhood on the human side of his being, but has, also, with that, all divine authority and prerogative; the eternal sovereignty is in him.

In any just conception of his human life, he is the highest among men; all the worth and dignity of our nature appear in him; he stands at the head of our race; humanity culminates in him. Even in this view, the startling demand he makes upon us might be justified; but in his highest exaltation, declared to be the Son of God, with power, he gathers into himself and stands for not only all human relations and rights, but all divine prerogatives and claims. Not only, then, does he represent all relations in himself, but he is the Author of all, and has infinite right over all. Then, those words of majesty be-

come his lips when he makes himself sole Lord of the heart, so that houses and lands are nothing to be surrendered for him, and even closest blood-ties—father, mother, brother, sister, child—are to be forsaken for him; ay, even our own life is to be abjured.

3. *This supreme and exclusive demand of Christ upon men does not interfere with, but assures and enhances, all social obligations.*

At first blush, it might seem that when our Lord asserts that the ties of domestic life are as nothing in the presence of his claim upon the heart, and even to be held in repugnance when considered as in competition with him, they are held as of little value. Nay, verily. These relations have a value and sacredness in the Christian code far above that given in any other system of morals. The law of filial piety—"Honor thy father and thy mother"—has its clearest interpretation and highest import in the teachings of Christ and his apostles. This relation was rescued by our Lord from the lax traditions of the elders, which taught that by a "gift" a man might be free from his father and mother; he set the perfect example of filial duty, being "subject to his parents," and yielding the most tender filial regard to his mother, even when he was in the agony of death on the cross. Obedience to parents, in all things, was rigidly enjoined by St. Paul. The absolute sanctity and inviolable obligation of marriage-vows was brought into its fullest expression by Christ and the New Testament writers; he allows divorce but for one cause—the absolute breach of marital fidelity by the offending party.

No; the Master does *not* make little of the sacred claims of domestic love; he sets them in the strongest light, raises them to their highest expression, and gives them a peculiar sanctity. The evil and wickedness of any violation of such obligations he puts in the strongest terms; but high and sacred as they are, he uses them as a background on which to project his own higher and divine claim. How great is he before whom the claims of a father, or the sacred duties of a child, are as nothing when compared with the obligations due to him! If the dreadful sin of violating domestic obligations is as nothing compared to sin against him, how high above all expression must be his most hallowed name!

But while he shows his own infinite exaltation in this comparison and contrast of all finite claims with his infinite claim, he does, also, give to these lower obligations the sanction of his sovereign will, so that to offend against filial, fraternal, or conjugal obligations is to offend against his divine will. He thus, in fact, gives to these human relations the dignity of a divine obligation. If, indeed, it shall ever occur, in any case, that a conflict shall arise between any domestic obligation and fealty to him, every thing must go down before him; but in actual life such cases are exceptional and extremely rare, so that in real life duty to men, in all the varied relations of life, is duty to him. By the terms of the moral law he has put the guard of his own authority around all human virtues and interests; to trespass against men, therefore, is to trespass against God.

Then, again, as the Son of man he concentrates

all human relations and interests in himself; he stands for all, and is the Guardian of all; he represents humanity; he lives not for himself, but for humanity; his human nature makes every thing that belongs to humanity sacred. No wonder, then, that all the dear relations of life are invested with a greater tenderness and sweetness where the Christian civilization prevails than in any other regions of the earth! no wonder that the home and hearthstone are more sacred here than elsewhere! no wonder that woman is more elevated and refined, and the marital bond more sacred! All men are his by the relation of a common humanity, and by the tenderness of redeeming love; wrong done to them is wrong done to him. Especially are those who believe in him related to him in vital consciousness, so that what is done to the very least of them is done to him.

We see, then, that Christ represents all divine authority and all human claims. To serve him, therefore, covers the whole ground of obligation, and fills the whole sphere of virtue; to do his will is to fulfill all righteousness; he is "God manifest in the flesh," and so stands before us for every thing divine and human. We have nothing to do but to learn his will and do the work he gives us. His will is the law of God; his purpose represents the highest virtue of humanity.

To be a servant of Jesus Christ is to be all that God proposes for us, and to respond, as well, to all the just demands of humanity upon us.

4. *In serving Christ there must be distinct consciousness of a personal relation.*

Service of Christ is not found in doing this or that, because, in a general way, we see it to be *right*. All right and wrong are determined by *personal relations*, as we have seen; and Christ is in relations to us that comprise all and control all. We must recognize the Master; we must hear his voice and submit to his will. There must be the *sense* of absolute obedience, of willing, hearty subjection. We must have the spirit of the servant. This is realized,

(1) *In a deep sense of reverence.* Indeed, there must be the reverence that amounts to fear. The servant is in awe of the master; it may not be a painful, oppressive fear, and in the case of the good servant will not be; but the authority, and majesty, and power of the master, supporting all his just exactions, cannot but produce a salutary awe in the right-minded servant. Toward our ascended Lord, to whom devils are subject, whom angels worship, to whom judgment is committed, an irreverent, flippant attitude is impossible on the part of any true believer; he knows our hearts, and the awards of eternity are in his hands. The angels are in awe before him. It well becomes us, men, to tremble before the presence of the King of kings.

(2) *In a true-hearted servant there is also love for the master, as well as reverence.* There is often peculiar warmth and tenderness in the love of a faithful servant; the sensibility is all the deeper for the reason that it is the outgrowth of reverence. The most whole-hearted and consuming love coëxists with awe, and even fear. To the Christian his Master is "chiefest among ten thousand," and "altogether

lovely;" he is "fairer than the sons of men," and his "lips overflow with grace;" "we love him, because he first loved us." To be admitted to the service of such a Master is itself overwhelming cause of gratitude; to be taken to a place in his house, and near his person, is sufficient to create the holiest enthusiasm of adoring love.

(3) *The personal servant is jealous of the honor of his master.* Many very beautiful instances of this have occurred, in former times, in the Southern States of our Union. He takes the greatest delight in the exalted character and honorable fame of the man whom he serves, and any reproach of his master is an affront to himself. How dear to the Christian is the honor of *his* Lord! He is fairly aglow with the thought that his name is above every name; he is never in an employment so congenial to him as when his voice, in unison with the multitudes of worshipers on earth and the hosts of heaven, raises ascriptions and shouts of praise to him who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

(4) *The faithful servant is intent upon his master's interest.* The servant of Christ, if he has the spirit of his calling, is in earnest labors, according to his opportunity and power, for the increase of the spiritual treasure of his Lord; he can never feel that he has done enough; he longs for a thousand tongues and hands, that he may work to some purpose in the half-supplied fields that are white to the harvest.

(5) *Fidelity and obedience are chief virtues of the servant.* Fidelity that can be corrupted by no temptation—what a noble quality! obedience that never

flags, is never inattentive, never indifferent—what an inestimable trait! Both must come of a deep sense of the personal and just claim of the master. To the Christian—the truly devoted servant of Christ—the Master is habitually present in thought, and all his life is adjusted to that fact.

(6) *The spirit of the servant reaches its perfection in a constant desire to have, and a constant effort to secure, the approbation of the master, whether in his presence or absence.* The Christian's happiness is consummated in the commendation of the Master; to hear that voice say, "Well done, good and faithful servant," will be more than heaven to him; night and day he labors with his eye on that reward.

II. THE APPROVED SERVANT IS HE WHO IS ALWAYS WATCHING, AND READY, AT A MOMENT, TO RECEIVE HIS ABSENT MASTER.

1. Our Lord, in his bodily presence, is absent from his people now, having gone up on high; he is not with us as he was with the disciples in the days of his flesh; he is gone away. No doubt, he is present in the Spirit, but he is present to our faith only, not to our sight. But,

2. He will come again. In his glorified human presence he will come suddenly, and every eye shall see him. But he will come, also, in a very important sense, to every individual, at the moment of death.

3. The time of his coming is not made known to his people; "of that day and hour knoweth no man;" and this is true alike of his coming at the last day and of his coming to us, individually, at the hour of death. In the most impressive illustra-

tion of the text, the lord, absent at the wedding, might return at any time, in the second or third watch. This would include a period of six hours, running from nine o'clock to three, in the night. At *any moment* within that time he might come; at any moment now he may come—to you, to me.

4. Happy is that servant who is ready at the moment.

The admonition of the text is, in the highest degree, striking and effective. The scene is laid in the dwelling of an Oriental lord; you are to imagine a magnificent mansion; it is night, in the dead hours; the lord is absent at a wedding; it *may* be long hours before he will return; his feet *may* be at the threshold even now; the domestic servants are within, waiting, to open the door when he knocks, and to render such service about his person as he may require, after he enters. In this attitude of affairs several important suggestions offer themselves:

(1) After the fatigues of the day this late watching must be painful.

(2) The temptation to relax, to sleep, or to throw off drowsiness in revelry, or to fall into ill-nature and strife among themselves, would be very strong.

(3) The master's absence and delay, and the uncertainty of the time of his return, would give opportunity to the temptation. Such a situation is a severe test of the qualities of a servant.

But the servants of this passage were men equal to the test; they were *ready*—ready at any time, ready *all the time*.

(1) "Their loins were girded about." This is a

very striking metaphor; it is used by the Apostle St. Paul, but with a different meaning; he speaks of the loins being "girded about with truth," as a part of "the whole armor of God," necessary for the Christian soldier. He has in view the contests which are to test the strength, as well as the courage, of the follower of Christ; his full powers will be called into play. In hand-to-hand contests the ancient soldier had often need for all the power of muscle that was in him, and more. Now, the loin is a sort of fulcrum for all the muscular leverage of the body. When any sudden weight is thrown against a man, if the loins yield he is overborne. To give firmness to this important part, both the soldier and the athlete fastened a broad, stout belt tightly about it; this was a support, and added greatly to the power of resistance; the muscular strain upon the body, terminating upon the loins, would rest on the band, and greatly augment the strength of the man.

This use of the metaphor is very suggestive. As the loins constitute a sort of fulcrum for the muscular leverage of the body, so that the whole strength of the man can never be greater than rests upon that support, so the support of all moral character is truth. The man who is girded firmly about with *truth* need fear no antagonist. What moral force conscious truth gives a man! what prowess in all contests!

But in the text the Christian is regarded not as a *soldier*, but as a *servant*; and the metaphor of the girded loins here suggests not the support of strength for the *contest*, but a state of actual, com-

plete readiness for *service*. The flowing robe of the Oriental servant required to be folded and fastened up by a girdle, so that the limbs should be unembarrassed and ready for active movement. The loins already girded shows a state of actual and complete preparation for duty, upon the sudden coming of the lord, so that not a moment should be lost in personal adjustment, and that instant and full attention should be given to the demands of the master.

(2) Their lights were burning. Not only were the servants in personal readiness, with girded loins, but the house was in complete order; the lights were burning; a lighted house and alert servants awaited the lord.

(3) They *waited* for their lord. No temptation to sleep, nor to any other indulgence that might beguile them from duty, was indulged for a moment by these men; they were true servants.

(4) They were ready, when the lord came—ready, whenever he might come and knock—to “open unto him *immediately*.”

(5) How the master was honored by such service! His will is regarded; his person is revered; his approbation is coveted.

Let the servant of Christ behold his model in this! He may be tempted to spiritual sluggishness, but let him never sleep; they that sleep sleep in the night. He may be tempted by his appetites; but they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But we are of the day, and not of darkness. Let our loins be girded! let us be on the alert! and, to resume fully the metaphor of the text, let our lights be burning!

let us keep both our lives and hearts so that we may not be in consternation when the Lord shall come!

III. THE APPROVED SERVANT SHALL HAVE A RICH REWARD.

The reward of a devoted and affectionate servant is not simply a just compensation of his labor; it is something more, and much better, than that; there is much of heart in it; there is reciprocation of confidence and of personal regard between master and man, which has a value far above all commercial standards; it is of a class of things that cannot be degraded to the level of mercenary interest; it is the enrichment of the heart. The benediction, "Blessed are those servants," is no mere assurance of the prompt and full payment of liberal wages; it is in a different and altogether higher order of things.

1. Such servants have a hold upon the master which assures a generous provision for their wants; he will "make them sit down to meat;" they are not reduced to subsist upon meager wages and a fixed dole of rations, which may not be sufficient in emergencies and in sickness—far from it; they have a command of their lord through his affections, which will secure them all they need from the rich resources of his estate.

2. The servant so fully approved shall have great honor; he may expect, on occasion, to have a place even at his master's table; he shall be distinguished by notable marks of regard; his very name shall be spoken with respect by his lord, and the fame of his fidelity and devotion shall go abroad like a perfume.

3. The servant that has established himself on such a footing with his master shall himself be served by his master's hand. "He shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." Verily, this servant has nothing to fear while his master lives; he has, so to say, a lien upon the estate, and a subtle command of the master. Gratified by the prompt and tireless fidelity of his devoted servant, the lord will not hesitate to gird himself and serve the servant, so far as his needs may require. Many a faithful slave in Alabama has had such care and tendance, in time of sickness and exigency, as he could never have commanded as a freeman, by securing the respect and affection of a good master.

Such honor and reward shall the servants of Christ receive; it will not be the stint of stipulated wages, but a free-handed outgiving from boundless resources. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things." No pantry nor store-house shall be locked against him; he shall be at home in his master's house, like a very child under the roof; nothing shall please the Master so much as to bestow all that the servant may need; not only will he feed him to the full, but crown him with honor, also: "If any man serve me, him will my Father honor;" he shall sit at the Master's table. "I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." As he has overcome and is set down with the Father in his throne, so his people that overcome shall sit with him in *his* throne; they shall have preëminent rank, even among the thrones of heaven; the Infinite Master

himself shall serve them. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." While their Master lives they can never want. Blessed, indeed, thrice "blessed, are those servants!"

The present is a memorial service. We recall, thus publicly, the name of our ascended brother, the Hon. WILLIAM M. BYRD.

You all knew him more intimately than I; you were his neighbors; many of you were members of the same Church. You need no testimony of mine as to his public virtues or his private worth; yet it is proper that we should linger for awhile upon some of the facts connected with his life, and upon some of the most striking traits of his character.

I need scarcely say that Judge BYRD was a man preëminent in intellectual endowments, and of high attainments in the legal profession. He was recognized, on all sides, as one of the most gifted citizens of Alabama; his reputation, indeed, was not confined to his own State; his fame was in other States, and was, in fact, national. On the Supreme Bench of the State, at the close of the war, by the breadth of his views, by his legal erudition and acumen, he contributed, in that critical and difficult condition of affairs incident to reconstruction, as much to the illustrious character of that august tribunal as any incumbent has ever done.

Not only by his great abilities, but by his judicial

and personal virtues, was he eminently qualified for his place in the Supreme Court; he was simply incorruptible. Not only was he inaccessible to mercenary influences, but he was in such steady poise in his sense of justice as to be independent of the more subtle but sometimes equally potent beguilements of social predilection. On the Bench *he had no friends, he had no enemies*; the balances he held responded to no weights but truth and justice.

He was a patriot. He did all that man could do, in his circumstances, to avert the civil war; when it came, in its dreadful fury, he was true to his State in every emergency; when it was over, his voice was for an equitable adjustment on a basis that should secure not only a permanent but a cordial peace. He loved his country too well to indulge in petty animosities; he longed for the return of national good-will.

He stood in the midst of the demoralizations which succeeded the war a very incarnation of integrity; lucrative positions were no temptation to him; the very offer of them, with implied services to be performed that his conscience condemned, only repelled him and excited his disgust; he even declined to practice in courts organized in a way to offend his sense of right, at a time when his practice would have been profitable, and when he needed the resources of professional labor. I never knew a man—I may say there never was a man—whose fealty to his principles was more inviolable.

In social life he was all you could desire in a friend. Stiff as a colossus when he stood on princi

ple, he was as flexible as a willow in the amenities of social life. What a charming companion he was! His flow of conversation was easy, instructive, suggestive, with great felicity of expression—sometimes playful and piquant, and, when he was aroused, brilliant.

But the great characterizing fact of his life—that which gave tone and color to it all—was that he was a *servant of Jesus Christ*.

It becomes us here and now to consider his character, especially in this aspect of it.

He was deeply conscious of his personal relation to the Lord. This consciousness was founded in *faith*, and Judge BYRD's faith was no mere speculation. Christ was no myth to him, but a divine Person, related to him in a human form of manifestation, which was at once the utterance of the divine compassion and the assertion of the divine authority. He recognized him as the Elder Brother and Divine Master—*his* Master for time and for eternity; his inmost soul *felt* the holy Presence. Such was his faith. With such faith, he took Christ to be the absolute Lord of his life; he gave himself up; he attached himself, in inviolable fealty, to the Master; *his* will was the law; in all things his pleasure was to be consulted.

He had the *deep sense of reverence* which enters into the true spirit of service. The fear of the Lord was before his eyes; it was not a cringing fear, but that deeper feeling which is grounded in love—the dread, not of punishment, but of offended love. He felt all the majesty of Christ, and responded to it

with hallowed awe, such as a great and pure heart must feel toward him. Our brother was incapable of flippancy. The magisterial character of the Son of God and his judicial administration, were realized to be facts of most solemn import, and, while he was not agitated by consciousness of guilt, he was in awe of the holy Judge. His own experience of the gravity of judicial functions and responsibilities may have aided his consciousness in this respect, in later life; at any rate, we know that he felt, most profoundly, the majesty of him whom he served as his proper Master.

Nor was his service less marked by true-hearted love; and by all the depth of his reverence the depth of his love was measured. Where there is a true love the power of it is in proportion to the greatness of the object. To all that excites love in Christ add all that is great, and you have the measure of the magnetism by which he attracted the heart of him whose memory we cherish to-day; his was the very enthusiasm of love. This fact appeared in many ways: he delighted to confess Christ before men; he took pleasure in his word, and was a devout student of it; I have rarely known a man who had a keener relish of the gospel narratives; he delighted to worship Christ, and to entertain his servants, under his own roof; he greatly enjoyed the solemnities of the house of God; he was rarely absent—never, if he could help it—from the social meetings. Here, in Selma, in this house, when only a handful were habitually assembled at the weekly prayer-meeting, was he not always there? The love of Christ con-

strained him. And when in the love-feasts he spoke of that name, did he not, my brethren, sometimes transport you, as it were, into the very presence of the King, as if he saw, indeed, "the King in his beauty, and the land that is very far off?"

If the personal servant is jealous of the honor of his master, by this sign, also, was Judge BYRD a servant of Jesus Christ; he was sensitive to the reproaches that were laid on him, and rejoiced in all the homage that was rendered to his name. No less was he devoted to the Master's interest; this he promoted by active service in his cause: in the Sunday-school, in various Church-offices, in official relation to Church institutions of learning, especially as President of the Board of Trustees of the Southern University, he served to the full measure of his opportunity. He was honored by a seat in the General Conference of his Church, in 1870, and, as in all lower stations, so here, he appeared in his place to work for the Master. He contributed of his means freely—perhaps I might say lavishly—to promote the enterprises of religion. Truly, I may say, he took no such pleasure in any thing earthly as in the increase of the Redeemer's kingdom.

Though he had a strong *will*, yet was he as docile before Christ as a little child. He knew the true attitude of the servant, and delighted to stand in it. The temper of his mind toward the Master was expressed in the words, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

No servant ever cleaved to a master with greater fidelity; no power could separate him from Christ—

neither the world, nor life, nor death, nor things present, nor things to come; no domestic attachment could destroy his polarity. Christ was above all, infinitely above all; yet not only was he above all, but he was *in all*. He saw in every man a brother of the Elder Brother; in the humblest man he saw not only a humanity common with himself, but represented, also, by the Son of man; especially if he were a disciple, he saw one to whom whatsoever was done was done to Christ. The humblest people knew they had a friend in Judge BYRD. The people of color felt, by a sort of unerring instinct, that they could trust him. Though there was no thing nor any man that he would not have at once forsaken for Christ, if the competition had been set up, yet, in fact, and in actual life, his social ties—unless there might have been a few exceptions in public life—were in the line of his devotion to Christ, so that those duties of subordinate relationship had upon them the sanction of Christ; and as Christ was in them, they were, by the measure of his divine claim, the more binding. So does a man become the better citizen, neighbor, husband, father, by so much as he is a single-minded and exclusive servant of Christ; for he serves Christ in all.

What this man was in his own house, and to his own wife and children, I dare not undertake to say. You who were his neighbors know as well as any can know whose hearts are not broken now; he was their ideal man, their earthly *all*; and that all—how *much it was*! Was he not, indeed, idolized? But upon this inner sanctuary of domestic love and agony

we must let the veil drop; we can venture no more than this glimpse of its sanctities.

But let us cast our eyes yet again upon this devoted servant of Christ. Whether at the bar, on the bench, in the Church, among his friends, or at his own fireside, the ruling motive of his life is to secure the approbation of his great Master. He knows the Master will come, but he knows not when. No doubt, he expects some warning, but it may be otherwise; he may come suddenly, unannounced. Days wear on—the faithful servant never flags; years elapse, and the spirit of service rises into enthusiasm. He entered upon this service in the flush of early manhood; years bring only a more ready obedience and a more hearty diligence; the Master becomes more and more to him, until it seems that he can never do enough to show his love; the loins are girt about with truth, and the robe is gathered up in preparation for any instant call; the lights are burning; the second watch is ended; it is the third watch; the time wears on. Does he faint? does he doze? Behold him, now! The loins are girded about still, and the lights all burning; he is waiting; he is doing all things as if the Master's eye was upon him. It is well; for the Master is at the door, coming silently, in the darkness, unannounced; in a moment he will knock.

On a short trip from home, on important business, Judge BYRD joins his friends at the depot, in the morning, cheerful as was his wont, enters the car—having completed his business—and is on the way again for *home*. *Home*—alas! he will never see it

more! The train is upon a bridge; there is a crash; the bridge is broken; the car he is in drops into the chasm!

The Master has come; he knocks; there is no warning; there is no time for preparation. But the servant is ready; he is waiting; he has been waiting long. By one exclamation he welcomes his Lord; the door is unbolted; the Master has come in; ere he is aware, the faithful servant is made to "sit down to meat" in the heavenly mansion, and sees the Master himself coming forth, girded, to serve him. He whom he served is not now ashamed to serve him.

Honored and provided to the fullest measure of celestial riches and dignity, the servant is with the Lord forever. The Master found him waiting, and all that the best of masters can be to his best servants will his Lord be to him for evermore. What a glorious reward!

Truly, blessed is this servant!

Going on to Perfection.

SERMON XIII.

“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.” Heb. vi. 1, 2.

THE antithesis between “the principles of the doctrine of Christ” and the “perfection” is the first thing in the text that strikes our attention. There is difference of opinion as to the exact import of these terms. Some suppose “the principles,” or “the *discourse* of the principles,” as they render it, refers to the imperfect statement of the truths of faith in the Old Testament Scriptures, and “perfection” to the final and full statement in the New. There is, no doubt, some plausibility in this view.

But, upon the whole, my conviction is that the antithesis is to be applied rather to different parts of the Christian doctrine than to different stages of its disclosure.

The philosophy of the Christian religion cannot be comprehended until we perceive a certain vital distinction of parts involved in it. That distinction I suppose to be given in the text, under the phrases, "principles," or, more in accordance with modern usage, "*rudiments* of the doctrine," and "*perfection*."

Christianity is a religion designed for *fallen* creatures, with a view to their recovery. There is that in it, therefore, necessarily, which would not appear in the religion of a community of angels. A revelation to a world where there was no depravity, no sin, would deal only with matters appropriate to holy natures; it would be designed only to establish and guide them in the condition of life they were already in, with a view to security and development. But Christianity is a religion intended for such as have fallen away from original purity, and is, therefore, adjusted to that fact. It is not, moreover, a revelation, simply, of God's will with respect to the treatment of depraved creatures; in that case, it would contain only a punitive code; but it is a revelation to a revolted province of Jehovah's empire, looking to the recovery of its inhabitants to their proper fealty. The administration in a province in revolution must differ widely from that of one in due submission and peace. That is the difference between the religion of heaven and that of the earth.

But the divine government on the earth is not punitive—it is restorative; it therefore involves a *process*—the process of restoration; this gives its *differentia*. But God's government of intelligent

beings, in all worlds, must be, in fact, a unit; the same principles of moral perfection must appear everywhere. The same ultimate condition, therefore, that obtains in a world where evil has never appeared must be contemplated as the end of a restorative administration in a fallen world; the same principles of purity must be contemplated as the issue of the process. So, precisely, in the Christian religion; it looks to the "perfection;" its aim is *restoration*; it looks to changes moral, physical, deep, pervasive, complete, so that we shall have a world "wherein dwelleth righteousness." The process contemplates a result.

The religion of Jesus, then, embraces, first, a *system of saving agencies*, and, secondly, *the principles which constitute the saved condition*; it involves a *process* and a *result*. There is the process of salvation, and there is the saved condition to be realized. This distinction is inevitable in fact, and apparent in revelation. It is this which, as I suppose, is given in the antithesis of the text—the rudiments embracing the method of grace—the perfection being the result, the saved condition when it is attained.

Let us leave the "principles of the doctrine," and "go on unto perfection." We are not to rest in the rudiments; there is nothing ultimate in them; they have no value in themselves—none whatever, except as they are related to the result; yet they are necessary; they cannot be dispensed with, because they constitute the only method of reaching the result. Perfection can be attained only through the rudimentary process.

The apostle proceeds from this general admonition to a more specific statement of the principles.

This statement embraces only six particulars, but the range of implications is very great, and, I suppose, embraces the whole field; it makes an analysis from the practical side, mainly. The divine agencies are only implied, except in one instance. Atonement is not specifically mentioned, but repentance and faith, which imply it, are. The work of the Holy Spirit is evidently referred to. With this exception, the rudiments given are those with which we have to do in a practical way, either as indicating duty or appealing to motives. Resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment appeal to motives to repent.

The six "principles" enumerated will be seen, upon a little reflection, to stand in pairs, and so to fall into three classes.

The first two—repentance and faith—belong to the personal, subjective process, through which salvation is attained.

The second two—the doctrine of baptisms and the laying on of hands—stand for the outward forms, which serve as means of grace. Besides this, the first one of the two, as we shall see more fully hereafter, refers directly to the work of the Holy Spirit.

The last two—resurrection and judgment—complete the saving process, and, for present practical ends, constitute powerful motives to repentance and a holy life.

We proceed to consider these *principles* more fully.

First, "Repentance from dead works." Repent-

ance stands first in fact, as it is first in the apostle's statement. This order is important. There are some who affirm that in the Christian life faith precedes repentance; but those who hold this view are such as teach a superficial doctrine as to faith. In their view, faith is mere belief. No doubt, a man must believe that God is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him, before he can repent; but this belief is common to all who are not infidels; it does not necessarily affect the life, at all, but is compatible with the deepest state of impenitency.

Repentance is the incipency of the spiritual life; conviction of sin by the Holy Spirit precedes and conditions it, yet it does not necessarily follow upon conviction. Conviction may be resisted; when it is yielded to it issues in repentance, and repentance is the first voluntary movement of the soul toward life; it is a gracious state, and is the first step; it is the concurrence of our will with the work of the Holy Spirit, *and in this concurrence is found the true definition of all saving experience.*

There is wide-spread popular error as to the nature of repentance, and this error is of bad practical tendency. My conviction is that men generally understand repentance to be an emotional phenomenon. This is, certainly, a most inadequate idea of it. Emotional manifestations are, rather, incidental to it; they are not to be discredited nor undervalued; but they do not constitute repentance. No doubt, where there is genuine repentance, there will be a feeling of humility and contrition; but this inward sense of sin, this profound feeling of contrition, is

not always accompanied by emotional ebullition. There may be a profound and healthy religious feeling that is not acute; there may be a most thorough repentance where there is no weeping; there may also be great emotional manifestation where there is no repentance, the connection of which with religion, in any way, is merely accidental. There may be a contagion of sensibility in religious assemblies, in which many will be affected to tears who show no other nor any permanent signs of repentance. We are in danger of making too much of mere sensibility.

I do not discourage emotion in religion; it is utilized to the highest ends. No doubt, in extensive revivals of religion, a mere contagion of sensibility has originated an interest, in thousands of cases, which has gone on to repentance. Every susceptibility of men's nature must be taken advantage of to lead them to Christ. An influence that has but little of what is distinctively religious in it, at first, may lead on to a genuine work of grace. All personal and social influences ought to be taken advantage of to save men; for many, if they are saved at all, will have to be "pulled out of the fire."

But the supposition, on the part of so many, that repentance is to be found solely in the sensibilities, that its depth and genuineness are to be determined by emotional phenomena, is liable to great abuse, and often, I doubt not, leads to evil consequences. Many are too well satisfied with mere ebullition, and many others unduly discouraged in the absence of it.

I once met with a man, in a time of great revival, kneeling with those who made open confession of sin, and evidently the subject of strong emotion. He was a man of powerful *physique*, and his frame was convulsed; he was in an agony. Every time penitents were called he came, and with the same intense feeling. My sympathies were fully aroused. This lasted for two or three days; the violence of feeling then abated, but he was still at his place. The next day I saw him seated in a remote part of the house. The expression of his face was peculiar; it was hard, emotionless, but profoundly miserable. I felt that things were going wrong, but did not know what the trouble was; I was young, and not deeply skilled in spiritual diagnosis. I went to him after the sermon—for he did not respond to the invitation—and took my seat by him in the pew. In answer to my inquiry, he said, “I am lost; I may as well give it up; there is no salvation for me; *feeling is all gone*; the Spirit has forsaken me; there is no hope for me; I am lost,” or words to that effect. I was at a loss what to reply; but a new light dawned upon me. I knew this man to be a man of good sense, and a sincere man. I discovered a truth then that I have never lost sight of since. Said I, “Tell me, if you thought it possible to be saved, would you continue to pray?” “Of course, I would,” said he. “Are you ready to abandon your sins if God will help you?” “To abandon my sins! yes, that is what I desire, above all things; but God has abandoned me, and there is no hope for me.” “How do you know God has abandoned you?” “Why, my

heart is as hard as a stone; I can't feel; the Spirit has left me." I told him he was mistaken; no man was forsaken of God who truly desired to give up his sins and serve him. "I know," I said, "what is the matter with you; you have been under violent emotion for several days; nervous tension has been too great; there was obliged to be reaction. That state of things could not last. You still earnestly desire to be a Christian; that desire is from God, and is proof that the Holy Spirit is still with you. The fact that you cannot command your emotions is not strange; you have mistaken a physiological phenomenon for a spiritual one."

So, indeed, it was. That man did feel, profoundly, but not acutely. The subsidence of emotional sensibility was no sign of a withdrawal of gracious influences, but only of nervous exhaustion. With great joy I saw him renew the effort, with more enlightened views; it was not long till he was rejoicing in God. I have little doubt that many, in this false view, have given up in despair, when judicious counsel might have led them to the light.

Repentance is not realized in the emotions alone, nor chiefly; it is a movement of the whole life; it involves the whole conscious nature, and culminates in the *will*; it is the inward *forsaking of sin*.

It is the movement of the soul away from sin, and toward God.

The Bible represents the sinner as being far from God; he is invited to come to God. The fact cannot be so well expressed in any other terms; yet I suppose that children are often misled by them;

they get the idea of distance from God, in space, and when they are invited to *come* to God they think of a movement in space. It is not that; it is as when two men are alienated from each other, and you say they are *distant* toward each other. Our distance from God is a fact of character; we are removed from him by sin, and every movement away from sin is a movement toward God. This is just what repentance is. There may be greater or less emotion; but if the soul turns away from sin, *that is repentance*.

And it is a work of grace; it is the incipency of the Christian life; it is the dawn, as the new birth is the sunrise, of the Christian day. A sincere and thorough repentance, if it is followed up, will as certainly issue in final salvation as the new birth will.

“Faith toward God” stands in immediate connection with “repentance from dead works,” and is a part of the subjective process in the great work of personal salvation.

We sometimes hear the phrase, “An act of faith.” I do not object to this form of expression, particularly, but yet it does not seem to me to indicate the nature of faith, with accuracy. Faith seems to me to be not so properly an *act* as a *state of the mind and heart*.

I have never yet seen any definition of faith that satisfied me. It is belief, but it is more than mere belief; indeed, it is more accurate to say it *involves* belief than to say it *is* belief. It also involves the fact of trust in the divine method of pardon. It is,

moreover, a personal affection. It is not mere trust in the method of pardon; it is personal confidence in the Author of the method. More than that: in faith the soul actually affiances itself to Christ. We *give him our faith*; we take him for all that he is; he is not only our Redeemer, but he is also our Lord. This Lordship is recognized in faith. We receive him as our absolute Sovereign; we enthrone him over our souls; he becomes to us King of kings and Lord of lords; he is to us God over all, and blessed for evermore. In faith there is constant fealty to him.

There is still another function of faith: it is spiritual insight; it is the perception of divine things; it goes beyond the mere belief of an unconverted man; it discovers the reality of unseen things: they become palpable; they are no longer obscure and half unreal, but the most real things in the whole range of thought. Faith is not actual vision of divine realities, but in its higher states it approaches even that; it is a cognition of them so full and assuring as to justify the exalted declaration of one of our sublimest hymns:

Faith lends its realizing light,
The clouds disperse, the shadows fly,
Th' Invisible appears in sight,
And God is seen by mortal eye.

Faith recognizes the fact that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." It accepts the gracious benefaction upon the revealed conditions, and rejoices in the forgiving voice of a merciful God.

Faith, I have said, supervenes upon repentance, and is vitally connected with it. Repentance is a movement toward God, and just where this movement touches consciously upon God it becomes faith. That conscious touch of God is faith. Here the new life begins. In faith the soul is receptive of God, and becomes the subject of his regenerating power. In vital communion with him we are transformed, and become, not by a formal adoption only, but by actual regeneration and participation of nature, his children; we are begotten again unto a lively hope; we are born of the Spirit.

Faith is the condition of receptivity toward God; it is the state of consciousness in which God, revealed in Christ, is actually *received*. "He came unto his own, and his own *received him not*; but as many as *received him*, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that *believe* on his name." From this passage it is clear that it is faith that receives Christ. Faith *is, in fact*, the condition of receptivity toward God. This is not merely a dogma of religion; it is also a *dictum* of philosophy. What a man believes he receives, so that, as truth, it becomes the property of his mind; what he *believes in* he not only receives, but appropriates, so that, by actual spiritual assimilation, it enters into his character. Christian faith, which is a belief, a confiding affection, and a receptive volition, is, in the highest degree, a *condition of receptivity*. In faith the soul is susceptible of God; it opens itself to him; it invites him; and where he finds an open soul he always enters, and wherever he enters

he brings salvation with him. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God."

I said I had not found any definition of faith that satisfied me. Faith covers too broad a field of consciousness and is too complex to be fully set forth in any brief formula; any compendious definition must be too general to give a full view. If I should attempt one, perhaps I might find a postulate that would cover the whole ground, and at the same time be perfectly accurate; but it would be so general as itself to require elaboration to bring out its import. *Faith*, I should say, *is the conscious right adjustment of the soul to God*; God is taken in all that he says and for all that he is. That is faith. He is *to me* all that the Infinite Father can be to the finite child.

Salvation is conditioned upon faith; *it is realized in faith*. This fundamental doctrine of Protestantism is as much a truth of reason as of revelation. In whatever act or state the soul becomes really receptive of God, it is restored to God in that fact; *and that is salvation*. When a man is in a state in which the agencies of grace can become operative in him, the gracious effect is inevitable. God is love, and only when his love is excluded is there death; he is the Fountain of life, overflowing upon all—*rich* unto all that call upon him; only when we are closed against him do we perish. Receiving the Atonement, we have pardon of our sin, and with that the renewing, sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit.

We see how closely repentance and faith are related: the Godward movement of repentance cul-

minates in faith; this is its consummation; in this it reaches communion with God, and takes vital hold of him. The process of voluntary return to God completes itself in faith.

“Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands.”

Baptisms—in the plural. If the reference is to the former dispensation, the baptisms are the various formal purifications of the Mosaic ritual; but if the exegesis I have adopted be correct, the baptisms must be something that belongs to the agencies and processes of salvation. But if so, why the plural use of the word? Does not the apostle say, in another place, There is “one Lord, one faith, *one* baptism?”

No doubt there is one *essential* baptism, and only one; that is the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

Why should we understand the *ordinance* of baptism to be meant wherever the word baptism occurs? The baptism of the Spirit is as much more important than the ordinance as the ministry of the Lord was more important than that of John. “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I”—so much mightier than I that I am not worthy to perform the most menial offices about his person—“whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.” The relative value of the work of John and that of Christ is the relative value of baptism by water on the one hand, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost on the other. This is the real baptism, that is the symbol of it; this

is the Lord's work, that is man's; this is the substance, that is the shadow; this is the one baptism, that represents it, in an outward and sensible form.

What a monstrous perversion it is to displace the substance for the shadow, to supersede the *real* by the *representative*! Let it not, then, be supposed that wherever the word occurs the ordinance is intended; on the contrary, unless the ordinance is indicated by the context, it is fair to interpret it as signifying the real baptism—the baptism of the Spirit. “One Lord”—he who, coming after the Baptist, was before him and mightier than he; “one faith”—faith in the one Lord; “one baptism”—the baptism of the one Lord: “he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.”

But in the text the formal outward baptism is also referred to in connection with the real, which it represents—baptisms. The ordinance is, indeed, a beautiful and most suggestive symbol of the work of the Holy Spirit. By the operation of the Spirit we are cleansed from sin, and the uses of water most naturally represent that work.

I do not care to make a quarrel with any one upon the form of an ordinance. Others may hold their own views as to the *mode* of this one; I shall seek no controversy with them. I might repel an ungenerous assault upon my own views; but I will not be responsible for rending the body of Christ upon such a question. I have my views, indeed, as to the proper mode of baptism, and they are clear and decided. Nor am I disposed to be silent on this point; for, while it is certainly not vital, I cannot consider it altogether unimportant.

The true baptism is described in several passages. The Holy Spirit "came upon" the disciples, "fell on" them, was "poured out upon them." The purifying presence comes *from above*; *this is called baptism*.

God has ordained baptism by water as the symbol of this, and it does, in the most natural way, represent it. Water is taken to represent the purifying effect of the work of the Spirit, for the plain reason that water is commonly used for purposes of purification; the only question is as to the mode of its use. Immersion in water does indeed represent the fact of purification very well; but it fails in one important particular when used to represent our spiritual cleansing—it does not refer to the *source* of it; it is from *above*—from God. Immersion in water fails to express that most vital fact; it represents the *fact* of cleansing, but does not refer to the divine agency. On the other hand, water poured upon the person expresses both the fact of the cleansing and its source: it is of God; it is from above.

It is no sufficient answer to say that there can be no special direction in space from which God comes upon us in the work of salvation; that up and down are but relative terms, and cannot apply to absolute space—space, as God inhabits it; that he fills all space, and the point in space which is *to us* above, now, will not be so twelve hours hence. I say that this is no sufficient answer, for two reasons: First, God uses these terms with respect to his relation to us. The Bible uniformly represents him as *above*, with respect to man. Though as to the mere phys-

ical idea of up and down he is on all sides of us, we must believe there is some truth expressed in the use of these terms; we have, therefore, no right to disregard them, nor to disparage the scriptural phraseology. In the second place, there is some natural correspondence between the physical relation of the high and the low and moral excellency and degradation. In all languages, that which is pure, and noble, and great, is characterized as being exalted, elevated, high; and, on the contrary, that which is mean, and corrupt, and little, and contemptible, is represented as being low. Hell is *beneath*, in uniform usage of both Scripture and common speech; heaven is *above*. Passing from a holy to a sinful condition is *falling*. Adam *fell*; the angels that kept not their first estate *fell*. Angels are in the heavens *above*, and God is over all, blessed for evermore—he is the Most High. This universal association of the good and the great with that which is high, which is above, gives important significance to the Scripture reference to the influence of the Spirit as being *poured out upon us*. It comes from that which is above us; it is from God.

Immersion, then, is only a half symbol; it represents the *fact* of cleansing, but not the source of it, while pouring represents both, and is the complete symbol of spiritual regeneration.

Baptism, as it is inward and real, is the actual work of salvation, wrought of God in our life; it is the work of which we become recipient in faith; it is the divine power delivering us from sin; it is the divine movement in response to the human move-

ment of repentance and faith. In fact, the divine movement anticipates repentance in its awakening and convincing function, but in actual regeneration it is in response to repentance and faith.

As it is outward and formal, baptism represents the inward work, and belongs to the system of ordinances, and, as such, has an important function as a means of grace, and belongs to the rudiments, to the process toward perfection, in a subordinate way, as the work of the Spirit does in its vital effect. The ordinances have no intrinsic value; their office is secondary; they contribute to the work of salvation not by their own proper efficacy, but as they contribute to quicken faith; they give sensible expression to spiritual truth—they are a sort of incarnation of it—in accommodation to our present condition, making use even of physical conditions to interpret spiritual truth to us, in order that it may become the more real to our faith. While we are in the flesh divine things condescend to approach us in incarnate forms. We contemplate God through such *media* as are adapted to our condition; but the day is coming when we shall require no such *media*, when “we shall see him as he is,” and “be like him.” Then, in that state, we shall have no temple to worship him in; we shall require no *media*, but “shall see as we are seen, and know as we are known.”

“Laying on of hands,” as an ordinance of the Church, is used in evangelical Churches only in the ordination of ministers of the gospel. Though it was used by the apostles on other occasions, yet its

habitual use from the beginning seems to have been confined to this. As an established ordinance of religion, this was clearly its design. In this use it has a special and beautiful significance. Hands are laid on him who devotes himself to the work of God, as if to take him away from the world, from all secular affairs, and hand him over to his sacred calling; henceforth he is the Lord's; his very avocation is spiritual; he is to "draw all his cares and studies this way;" he is to have nothing else to do; he is taken possession of by the Church, and the whole man—body, soul, and employment—is to be consecrated to the work of God.

The Lord's Supper is omitted in the enumeration of ordinances, though certainly it is not the least of them; but the enumeration, it will be remembered, is not exhaustive, a part being given for the whole. This is not unusual, in either sacred or secular literature. Baptism and laying on of hands stand, in this place, for the whole system of ordinances in the Church. That this system belongs to that which is rudimentary in the Christian religion requires no proof; it is evident at first blush; it is a part of the process through which the result is to be reached; it belongs to the agencies and methods by which we go on to perfection.

But as in the text the rudiments are presented in three classes, and each class is represented by two particulars, so only two of the ordinances are here specified. The two stand for their class.

"Of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." In these the consummation is reached; the

process of recovery ends in them; they introduce the saved to their final and highest perfection.

The resurrection of the body is a doctrine peculiar to Christianity; it is found in no other system of belief; if it is intimated in any other, it is in a vague and indefinite way; but in the Christian teaching it is categorically affirmed, and is defined with perfect precision. "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." This "vile body" is to be raised, and "fashioned like unto His glorious body."

Though actual identity of personal being is to be found in the *soul*, yet there can be no doubt that the physical nature is the necessary vehicle of spiritual powers; so we may well believe that the soul, existing separately from the body, cannot realize its destiny. What the conditions of consciousness are in the case of disembodied spirits we cannot imagine. That they are conscious there is no doubt, nor is there a doubt that the righteous enter at once into a state of blessedness after death; but it seems equally certain that in that state they are not capable of their highest activity, nor of their fullest destiny.

In this fact is given, no doubt, the difference between the condition of the soul before and after the resurrection; it must have its proper vehicle in order to realize the highest possibilities of its nature; it must possess its body again; but it will not be the body in its present gross form. The body will be redeemed not only from death, but also from its present coarseness and corruption, and fashioned upon the model of our Lord's glorified body. What

wonders of force, of activity, and of beauty, may be realized in a physical form we shall probably never know, until we see the "redemption of the body." What achievement the soul may be capable of we must learn from the event, and can never know until that takes place.

It has pleased God to dispose of all men, from the time probation ends to the last day, by placing them in that condition which we call death. The soul is separated from the body, which falls into dissolution. For reasons known to himself he proposes a public and formal judgment, at which all men shall be assembled, and the history and character of every man shall be brought out in the presence of all the rest. The dead are to be raised on the last day, and made immortal; the soul is again to inhabit its body; the deeds done in the body are to be brought under judicial review, and a just award made in each case for eternity. Then the righteous, raised from the dead, the soul and body joined again, shall be in a condition to enjoy the destiny for which they were created; the *process* is completed; *perfection* is reached.

In a very important respect, no doubt, and as to spiritual character, perfection is reached by the people of God in this world. Faith appropriates the merits of Christ, and we "are complete in him;" his "blood cleanseth us from all sin." This is the glorious privilege of believers, even amid the corruptions of time; "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." The liberty of the sons of God, even in this life, is a grand triumph indeed, and is *perfection* in inward purity, yet a perfection

subject to limitations of ignorance and infirmity. The redemption of the body must come before the final and highest perfection is reached.

II. We come to consider, in the second place, *the relation of the system of rudiments to the perfection*. "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection." As a practical suggestion, applicable to our present state, how shall we understand the injunction, "*Leaving* the principles," "*go on* unto perfection?" How do we *leave* the principles? Do we abandon the use of them, and occupy ourselves simply with the perfection?

On the contrary, perfection is to be attained only by the use of the rudiments, and they are to be left in no sense that implies casting them aside; yet there is a very important sense in which they are to be *left*.

Take a child, at the outset of its educational course; it is occupied exclusively with the alphabet. This is mastered at last; he knows every character, and can name it at sight. Now he is ready for another step, and is directed to leave the alphabet, and proceed to the formation of syllables. He leaves the study of the form and name of the several characters, and proceeds to study their powers and functions. That accomplished, he leaves it again, and learns to combine syllables into words, and these into sentences, and finally, through all the mysteries of punctuation, and accent, and emphasis, and inflection, he acquires the art of reading. But though he leaves the alphabet, and syllable-making, and all the rest in their turn, he yet carries them all along

to the last. He leaves them in one sense, in another he does not; he leaves them as *studies*, but continues to use them as *instruments*.

But when he can read, is he educated? Far from it; *his education is not begun*; he is only prepared now to begin his real education. He has simply acquired the use of those rudiments by which he is to acquire knowledge; that is all. So the characters and signs of mathematical text-books are only rudiments. Through the use of them the most intricate problems may be solved, and the sublimest truths reached; but they are not science.

The Perfect Intelligence does not require the aid of rudiments; God knows all truth, in all its most complex relations, without any such aid. But we require this rudimentary process; our memory must have these aids, and our progress will depend greatly on our skill in the use of them. This is an incident of our imperfection in intellectual power.

We never leave repentance and faith, as to the use of them. When we have acquired the power of repentance and faith the attainment of them is no longer an objective point; but we shall need to *use* them to the end of our days. Through them we are to go on to holiness, which is our real perfection. In holiness of heart and life the whole process must find its consummation. We never leave the ordinances; they are important aids to faith. There is a practical use even of those facts which belong to the final movement of the process in which it reaches the heavenly perfection. The resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment appeal with great power

to the motives; they are most cogent incentives to repentance and holy living.

If we were "already perfect," we should not require these rudiments; but, alas for us, how far we are from it! "In me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." We are born into the world in a depraved condition; therefore are we incapable of purity; it can be attained only by a divinely-ordained method. There must be agencies of grace to convey a divine and saving energy, so that through the power of God we may be recovered to himself.

The value of the rudiments is not in themselves, but in their relation to the object which they contemplate. Only as the "principles of the doctrine" tend to "perfection" are they of any real value; but their relation to this gives them the highest conceivable value. The scaffolding is as important as the house, though in itself it has not the slightest importance; but without it the house could not be; its whole value is in its relation to the house, but in that relation, since there could be no house without it, it has the full value of the house itself.

Let no man disparage any step, however feeble, in the way to holiness. Repentance may have no merit in itself; faith may have none; but, as rudiments through which holiness is attained, they have a dignity and value that no words can express. The upward struggles of a soul from the depths and horrors of sin engage the sympathy of angels, among whom there is joy over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance. The ordinances, however inoperative

in themselves, as they are means of grace, and tend to quicken faith, contribute to the great result, and acquire a high and hallowed significance; but all these values are ascertained in the great end toward which the whole system progresses.

III. Let us remark, in the third place, more largely upon the nature of the perfection.

1. *It is subjective.* As such it is realized, first, in character; all taint of sin is purged away; the affections and dispositions become pure; the motions of the will are freely and joyfully concurrent with the demands of God's will; inward pollutions are purged away by the blood of the cross, and positive, active goodness takes place; sinful propensities are overcome by the indwelling Spirit of God; holy affections and desires after God give character to the whole man.

The man who is holy loves God with his whole heart, and his neighbor as himself; outward goodness is the fruit of inward grace.

I do not propose, at this time, to indulge in any discussion of the doctrine of Christian perfection, in any aspect of it upon which there may be honest differences of view. In one thing all are agreed: no impurity can enter heaven. "Without holiness no man can see the Lord." Salvation, as it is final and finished, means sinless perfection, absolute purity. "Be ye holy, even as I am holy."

Those holy gates forever bar
Pollution, sin, and shame;
None shall obtain admittance there
But foll'wers of the Lamb.

I ask *you*, then, people of God, who are present here to-day, Are you living up to a standard of Christian purity and devotion which you yourself recognize as being attainable? are you *going on* to perfection? are you making constant and sensible progress? are you, by repentance and faith, and prayer, and the constant and faithful use of the ordinances, *pressing* toward the mark of the prize of your high calling? are you living daily in prospect of the resurrection, and with a view to eternal judgment? Having this hope in you, are you purifying yourself, even as He is pure?

Subjectively, perfection is to be realized, also, in physical conditions. The body, at last, in the resurrection, will be the seat of no appetites that will be the occasion of sin; there will be no "motions of sin in the members" then; the conditions of the physical nature will conduce to holiness; there will be no conflict, as now, between "the flesh and the spirit;" the flesh will no longer "lust against the spirit." Not only will there be no temptation in the members, but there will be no pain; there will be no sickness; there will be no injury from accidents; the body will be so vital and elastic that it will be as independent of accident as the atmospheric air; there will be overflowing sense of life—delicious life—in every organ and in every member.

Perfection will be realized in intellectual powers. "We shall know as we are known" in the world to come; we shall comprehend nature in all its magnitudes and mysteries; we shall understand providence in all its most inexplicable dispensations.

How we are now bewildered, sometimes, and even tempted to doubt God! How often are the dreadful experiences of the seventy-third Psalm suffered by the children of God! So strange, so dark to us seem the distributions of good and evil amongst men; but then we shall see the wise method that governed all, and the infinite goodness that prompted all.

2. *The perfection will appear, also, in objective conditions.*

The relations of the saved among themselves and with God will be perfect; there will be nothing to offend; the blessedness of each will be consummated in the glory of others; the reciprocations of celestial friendship and the confidences of holy love will constitute the perfection of social possibility. We shall be conscious of God; he will be present over all and in all, and his smile will be upon all.

The celestial nature will be all that Divine Wisdom can achieve in beauty and adaptation for the happiness of his people. In nature, as we are now related to it, the adaptation, though striking and beneficent, is not complete; for while there is much that conduces to happiness and health, there is much, also, that is destructive of both, and beauty, though profuse and often exquisite, is marred by many deformities, which are always repulsive and often hideous. But when the perfection shall be realized—when the new heavens and the new earth shall appear—there will be nothing to offend; eye, and ear, and touch, will give exquisite response to every contact with a perfect nature; the skies will be forever

radiant, the fields forever covered with verdure, the trees perpetually in efflorescence and in fruit; perennial fountains of blessedness will be evermore at flood; the atmosphere, pure and perfumed with celestial odors, and reflecting the uncreated light, in ten thousand hues, from jeweled walls and domes, will bathe the City of God in eternal splendors; music in full perfection of harmony and melody—now hushed almost to nothing, holding the ear in doubt whether it be sound or silence, now trilling, swelling, rushing, a very riot of accordant and triumphant sounds, jarring the walls of heaven with its vibrations—will give voice to raptures which not even immortal speech could utter. Consciousness, alive with deepest and most varied susceptibilities, will be set in the midst of opulent supplies; every demand within will meet its full and instant response from without.

But the blessedness of that world will not be merely *passive*, nor chiefly so. Not in receptivity, but in action, is the highest destiny. Not only have we susceptibilities to be met, but powers to be employed. There will be noble ends to attain, holy ambitions to satisfy, beneficent objects to accomplish. What these may be I shall not now consider, though the theme is tempting; but be assured we shall not just *vegetate* in heaven; we shall *act*; we shall achieve; we shall deliver ourselves upon the objective; we shall exert ourselves, and see the fruit of high endeavor in conditions of existence evolved by our own thought and handling. Happiness is consummated in *achievement*.

To crown all, there will be the presence, the approbation, the manifested glory of God; the Creator will smile upon his creature. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."

There we shall see his face,
And never, never sin;
There, from the rivers of his grace,
Drink endless pleasures in.

Hear what the word of God says: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new." "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." "And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God; and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." "And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him; and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads." "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates

into the city.” “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.”

Natural Death.

SERMON XIV.

"The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." 1 Cor. xv. 26.

I. *NATURAL death is not the penalty of sin.*
The truth of this proposition is evident from several considerations.

1. Infant children die, but infant children do not suffer any *penalty*; they do not suffer a penalty for their own sin, for they have never committed any; they do not suffer the penalty of Adam's sin, because they are not responsible for that, and even those who hold that it is imputed to them hold, also, that Christ has borne it for them. All agree that those who die in infancy are saved; but those who are saved do not suffer the penalty of sin. Whatever may be the evil that children suffer, as a consequence of the first transgression, it is countervailed in Christ. None can suffer a penalty, properly, except those who have sinned in fact, in their own person; no individual is punished for the sin of another. The death of an infant child, then, is not a penalty. If

natural death, in any one case, is not a penalty, it is not, in its proper effect, penal; if it were, in its own nature, a penalty, it would be penal in every instance of its infliction. But a very large proportion of the human race die in infancy. They do not suffer a penalty, in any proper sense of the word; therefore, natural death is not in the nature of a penalty.

2. The righteous die, as well as the wicked, but they die in Christ; yet physical death, in their case, is not different from what it is in the case of the unsaved; it is death in every thing that constitutes the fact. But those who are in Christ suffer no penalty; we may rest assured on that point. He has met the demand of the law upon them, and delivered them from its condemnation; they are "not condemned;" and how shall those who are free from condemnation suffer a penalty? Christ delivers his people from the curse of the law, being made a curse for them; but he does not deliver them from natural death; therefore, natural death is not the curse of the law—it is not the penalty of sin.

3. The penalty of the first law given to man—the law of Eden, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"—was not physical death; that was not denounced upon man until after the fall. It was after the first sin, and after the promise of redemption, that God said, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

Our Lord represents natural death as a fact not to be dreaded: "And I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that

have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him." Luke xii. 4, 5. Or, as in Matt. x. 28, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Be assured that when the Infinite Judge punishes sin the stroke will be more dreadful than temporal death. In the case of Adam, if there had been no arrest of penalty by the interposition of a Redeemer, no doubt he would have fallen, *soul and body*, into hell, as the wicked must do after the resurrection. That must have cut off the human family in the bud, and there could never have been any such thing as natural death. The death that never dies is the penalty of sin.

II. *Man seems to have been created under the law of mortality, as to his physical nature.*

I say *seems to have been*, for I would not dogmatize on such a point; yet, on scientific grounds, the proposition can scarcely be doubted. It is true that questions of faith are to be determined by Scripture alone, and not by science. But I have no morbid jealousy of science; I have not the least apprehension of any conflict between it and the word of God. No doubt scientific speculation is often dangerously adventurous, as well as over-confident, and reaches premature conclusions, and thus finds itself in the predicament of affirming postulates which prove to be unsupported by facts. This species of scientific dogmatism is always bold and boastful, and is often

found in antagonism with Holy Scripture. So there is, also, a habit of theological speculation, which takes its own fancies for dogma, and which is put to confusion by the advance of knowledge.

But the intelligent Christian has witnessed too many instances of imaginary contest between science and the Bible to be alarmed by the outcry of novices, in either the one department or the other. The theologian may waste a world of ammunition in the defense of a misplaced garrison, and, when at last he loses the position, wake up to the discovery that it was not of the slightest importance. So the adventurer in science throws out pickets which he has soon again to call in, and after all the fighting on both sides it is discovered that there is no war at all.

That man was created under the law of mortality is a suggestion of science which not a few have taken to be an attack on the citadel of the faith; but, certainly, there is no established Christian doctrine that it contradicts; its acceptance by the theologian will not disturb a single stone in the temple of faith.

Perhaps it is premature to affirm it as a truth finally settled; but it seems to me to be determined beyond reasonable doubt.

It is true that the science of geology is too new to be trusted at all points; but some of its conclusions must be accepted as indubitable. To deny its plainest intimations seems impossible. Among its unquestionable averments are these:

1. There was animal life on the earth long before the creation of man.

2. This life existed under the *law of mortality*, dumb brutes *lived* and *died*.

3. Life was very abundant before the human period, and death was universal; mortality was not exceptional; death reigned; it was the law of existence. By an invariable law all animal forms went to decay; there were no exceptions; they were constituted for it.

When at last man appeared, he, too, had an *animal nature*, existing under physical conditions identical with those of the lower orders. Differing from them in a striking way, in form and texture, indeed, man has yet a body subject to the same laws of birth, growth, nutrition, and decay; like theirs, it was constructed for dissolution; its very organization contemplated this result; every thing goes to establish its identity, in this respect, with all that had existed previously; there was nothing in all its organs and functions to indicate exemption from the universal law, but exactly the contrary.

Nor is there wanting Scripture intimation to the same effect. See 1 Cor. xv. 45-50: "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh

and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."

I am not certain that I comprehend this remarkable passage; but one thing seems to be clear—that is, that as to his physical nature man was created in a corruptible state; he was "of the earth, earthy;" he was dust, and ready to be remanded to dust. At his creation man was flesh and blood—mere common flesh and blood—as to his physical organization, and not constituted of material that could inherit the kingdom of God. No doubt there is a measure of physical degeneracy, now, due to the fall; but even before the fall man's body was flesh and blood, only; it was of the earth, and tended to the earth; it was earthy. For this passage goes back to the creation of man, and does not describe a condition that arose later, merely; it speaks of man as he "was made."

There can scarcely be a doubt, therefore, that man was created under the general law of mortality, as to his animal nature.

Are we, then, to understand that death was inevitable? Was man doomed, even if he had not sinned? I answer, with emphasis, and without hesitation, No! for,

III. *Though created under the law of mortality, man was designed for immortality.*

He was created under physiological conditions which identify him with the lower orders of animals, and especially in those particulars which involve the fact of mortality, and which clearly show that he was under the same law of dissolution; but that he

was not destined for such a fate we gather from several considerations.

1. Though identified with the lower orders in his physical constitution, there is yet that in his *physique* which indicates a vast superiority. This superiority is not seen in either the quality of strength or of agility. In both these respects he has many superiors, as also in bulk. The facts in which his superiority is found are of a very different class. Nor does it appear in quicker or more acute sensation. In some of the senses there are dumb brutes that have the advantage of him. But he has an organism which fits him for higher destinies than they.

Take his hand, for instance. You see in that wonderful organ the agriculturist, the architect, the artisan, the artist. The human arm is a scepter of dominion over the world. With the hand, simple as its construction is, man grasps nature, and brings out of it all the physical conditions of civilization. So perfectly are its several parts adjusted to each other, and contrived for their end, that it subdues the earth and fashions matter to the multiform purposes of intelligent occupancy and convenience; it is formed both to make and guide the plow, to fashion and to push the plane, to construct and manage the most complicated machinery, and so to bring earth and rock, wood and metal, into shapes and adjustments such as supply all the needs and conveniences of life; it wields the chisel, and the shapeless marble is transformed into a Venus; it manipulates the pencil, and a paradise is created upon canvas; and so it meets the higher demands of taste and sentiment,

evoking their most delicate expression from commonest and coarsest things; it builds ships and adjusts magnets, and, behold! man dominates the ocean; it levels mountains, fills valleys, spans continents with iron rails, and he lords it over space; it strings a wire along over the land and under the ocean, and he converses with his neighbor on the other side of the earth; it seizes the pen, and the thought of ages stands before you in your library; it creates type and press, and the rivulets of literature swell into rivers, and flood the world. This one part of man's material organization shows him as standing to nature in a relation of superiority not approached by any of the lower orders. The constructive powers of the ant, the bee, the bird, and the beaver, bear no comparison to the handiwork of man. Their work is perfect after its kind; but in each case it is limited to one kind, and that is done always just in the one way. The bee builds nothing but hexagonal cells, and, in every instance, of the same material; his working apparatus is adapted just to that and to nothing else. And so every species of ant has its *one* sort of work, and its one way to do it; so of birds; so, also, of beavers; and, indeed, if there were ever such perfection of intelligence, they have no *organ* for other than just the work they do; they have no *hand*, no instrument so flexible, so adaptable, as to be equally facile in any style of work. They cannot *handle* nature beyond the barrier of a very narrow limit.

Over them, also, indeed, as over material substances, man rules by the same scepter. He has the

upper hand of them; he lassoes them, bridles them, halters them, saddles them, harnesses them, goads them, *with his hand*; without it his lordship over them could never be maintained. He would make a *poor fist* of it in any effort to maintain his supremacy if this imperial instrument were wanting; but with it he is the throned monarch of the world.

To say the least, this organ singles him out as being designed for destinies incomparably higher than those of any other species of living creature upon the earth; it indicates for him a sphere of employment so much higher, and a range of activities so much wider and more various, as to remove him out of their category and set him in exceptional and solitary dignity and distinction; it removes him to such an elevation as to justify the expectation of singular and exalted destinies in his case.

Not less remarkable and distinguishing are the capacities and functions of the human voice. It is as diverse from all other voices as if it had been intended for a different world—as, no doubt, it was. For variety of sounds and power of expression it can be compared with any other only in the way of contrast.

In music it so far surpasses any other voice, or any instrument, that none can be named in connection with it. From the lowest guttural bass to the trill of highest pitch it sweeps the whole range of melodies with a sweetness, an expression, and a pathos, all its own.

It is the most perfect vehicle of emotion. Every different sensibility of the human soul has its pe-

cular tone. Grief and joy, love and hatred, compassion and revenge, humility and pride, may each express itself perfectly by the *tone*, without a spoken word, and each expresses the degree of its intensity.

Its power of varied articulation is inconceivable—for aught I know it may be infinite—so flexible, so perfect is the vocal apparatus. Take all possible vowel, and consonant, and guttural sounds, and in all their possible combinations, and all variations of tone, and inflection, and emphasis, in which they may be uttered, with every shade of difference in swell and cadence, in force, in melody, and in every conceivable particular of variety and difference, in every respect, and you shall find that human speech, considered in its merely physical aspects, might furnish matter of study for a life-time.

Hear it in the whisper, the common tone, the call, the outcry, the shout, the shriek; hear it stating facts, explaining, arguing, insisting, exhorting, beseeching, pleading, wooing, cooing, coaxing, chuckling, exulting, laughing, expostulating, warning, affirming, denying, scolding, reproving, commanding, rebuking, condemning, approving, commending, complimenting, criticising, carping, cajoling, bantering, complaining, correcting—with an adapted tone for every various purpose of speech. How every several tone affects you—pleases you, vexes you, worries you, thrills you, alarms you, soothes you, enraptures you, rouses you, wins you!

A wondrous thing is this human voice! Its bestowment presages highest ends of being. He who is endowed with it is surely of no class of *ephemera*;

he was not created to play a part upon a puppet stage, and pass away. If in one department of his being he ranks with "dumb driven cattle," it must be only in a germinal stage of his career; if he is a worm, he is no *mere* worm, but ready to be transformed; and no revelation of the Creator's purpose elevating him above the reach of death can take us by surprise, so distinguished is he by this one function above the brutes that perish.

But this distinction appears, farther, in the range of his physical wants and in their susceptibility of cultivation and extension. For food, and drink, and shelter, and fuel, and clothing, and labor, and recreation, the domain of nature is laid under contribution to its full capacity. Minerals, soils, rocks, vegetable products, and dumb brutes, all contribute to house, clothe, and feed him, and furnish him with means of labor. Under chemical treatment he extorts a thousand uses, alimentary, medicinal, luxurious, from the crude substances at his command.

The capacity to develop and multiply wants distinguishes him in a most striking way, and puts him into universal relationship with nature. The savage can subsist from the resources of his native forest, but the civilized man collects his feast from four continents and a thousand islands of the sea. Equatorial heats mature his fruits and spices, and the waters of Newfoundland breed his fishes, while Arctic *infusoria* fatten his whales; the cotton of the South, the flax of higher latitudes, and the furs of Labrador and Alaska, cover his person with convenient variety of adaptation for comfort and ornament, in win-

ter and in summer; even a disgusting worm spins the attenuate thread from which he weaves his costliest fabrics, and insects gather for him the most delicious sweets. All nature conspires to serve him, and the range of his cultivated wants is sufficient to demand the universal contribution.

Another striking distinction of man in his physical structure, and one often mentioned, is his *erect posture*. He carries his head aloft, as if in proof of an imperial nature. His body is the fit vehicle of a noble life; it hints a heavenward destiny. Add to this the majesty of his brow, the supremacy of his eye, and the wonderful power of expression in the facial lines, and you have a material organization so diverse from aught else, and so immeasurably superior, as to be the prophecy and assurance of a nobler destiny—of a purpose of his Creator that contemplates too wide a range to be realized in the meager opportunities of a mortal state. He lifts his face and fronts the universe with a port and bearing that assert celestial kinships, and give expectation of release from the lowly affinities of his incipient state. He was created of the earth, but ordained for heaven.

2. In addition to the marvelous physical superiority of man, there is the greatest marvel of all—the intellectual and spiritual nature—expressed in the understanding, the reason, the sensibilities, the conscience, the will.

Such an instrument as the human hand must have existed in vain if there had been no rational *mind* to use it; but the rational mind finds only its lowest

employment in inspiring the labors of the hand; it grasps nature in perception and reduces it by analysis, thus creating science; it traces the deepest intimations of existence, its most subtle relations and sublimest suggestions, and constructs philosophy; it establishes the dominion of intelligence so widely as to give assurance of undeveloped capacity for cosmic sweep of activity and control. Already he has extorted some of their secrets from the fixed stars, incomprehensibly distant from him as they are. Even those remote abysses of space, in which the angle is reduced so as to bring massiest suns, immeasurably removed from each other, into mere nebulous patches of undistinguished light, yield up to him the mysteries of their nature.

The name of God, written in mystic hieroglyph in the heavens and in the earth, he at last spells out and comprehends. Conscience is awakened in him; he realizes the Creator, and in realizing him comes to the sense of *moral obligation*; he is in hallowed relations with the Infinite; he comes to know the meaning of the word HOLY; sacred things disclose their divinest significance to him; he has faith; he hears inaudible voices, and sees the Invisible.

Toward nature, and man, and God, he experiences the deepest sensibilities; he finds beauty for the eye, and music for the ear, and love for the heart, and in himself the most exquisite susceptibility to all.

In the midst of all this complex consciousness lies the spring and source of all activities and energies—the will. He was made not only to know, and reason, and feel, but to *achieve*; he projects himself

upon nature, and produces results. He was made to accomplish *ends*, both with respect to himself and others—to bring about conditions of good.

Finding a being so endowed created under the law of mortality, we must suppose that under the hand of a beneficent Creator he would soon be lifted to a higher plane, and relieved of a condition so low. Surely he will not be left to take his lot with “the beasts that perish.” Why he was created in physical conditions so mean we may not know; but if we should find the purpose and method of his speedy elevation out of it, it would but be what we should expect; nor in this would the method differ from what we see in many things in nature. Existence, in its first forms, is often but rudimental, and the rudimental condition gives scarce a hint of the coming glory. We are not surprised, therefore, to find revealed,

IV *The purpose and means of counteracting the effect of the law of mortality under which he was created.*

The means provided was the *tree of life*.

I repudiate, with emphasis, the supposition that the first chapters of the book of Genesis are allegorical. They have all the marks of genuine history. There is no break between them and the later portions which are acknowledged by all to be historical. The entire account of the creation, of Eden, of the temptation, of the first sin, and of the expulsion from the garden, is a narrative of actual facts. In this narrative is the account of the tree of life.

What was the purpose of it? Clearly this: that, partaking of its fruit, man would experience physical

changes which would render his body immortal—such changes as would bring his body into the same condition as that of the resurrection body. It would have been the same change as that which will be effected in the bodies of those who will be still living at the time of the general resurrection. Of them the apostle says, They “shall be changed” and “caught up together” with those who shall then be raised in an immortal state, to “meet the Lord in the air.” He “shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.”

That any fruit eaten should produce such a wonderful effect may seem incredible at first blush. But is it incredible? Do we not know enough of chemical and vital changes to render it altogether reasonable that God *could* create a substance having that wonderful vital potency? No doubt of it. We are assured that that very change *will* take place, by some means, in the resurrection; and if by *some* means, then by any that the Infinite Creator might see fit to ordain. There is nothing in this to stagger faith. “Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?” Why should it be thought a thing incredible that God, who made man mortal, should have found means to raise him to a condition of immortality?

That the fruit of the tree of life was designed to produce this effect is evident from the fact that we have the divine declaration that even after he sinned if man had partaken of it he would have *lived forever*. *For this reason* he was expelled from the garden, and for this reason the way of the tree of life

was guarded against him by angels with a flaming sword; for after he fell, and was brought under the provisions of the plan of salvation, it suited the divine purpose to remand him to the dust from which he had been taken; and so, shut out from the tree of life, he was left under the dominion of the law of mortality, under which he had been created.

If man was created immortal, there could have been no conceivable object of that tree. Upon no other hypothesis than that I have laid down can any rational account of its existence be given; but upon this hypothesis all is plain and rational. Man was created under the law of mortality, and in that state put upon his probation. If he had stood the probationary test, then, at the close of the term, upon some divine suggestion, or perhaps upon the prompting of an appetite that would be felt at the right moment, he would have resorted to the tree of life. By the proper, natural effect of this fruit the deepest physical changes would have taken place; his body would have become a "spiritual body," such as all the saints in glory shall have after the resurrection, and he would doubtless have been removed to a higher state.

But *why* should man have been created under the law of mortality, with provision to countervail its effect? Why should he not rather have been *created immortal*? Suppose we cannot answer? There are a thousand things we do not understand. The everyday world is full of unsolved and, to us, insoluble mysteries. We may believe that this mortal state was adapted to a probationary condition, or we may

suppose that he was created with prevision of the fall. This last suggestion does not necessarily involve the doctrine of predestination; it may be true, and I see no insuperable objection to it. It is sufficient, however, for us to inquire in what state man *was* created, and what we see to be the fact we must accept, whether we are able to comprehend God's *reasons* or not; his facts we are bound to accept.

Upon any other theory than that which I have given the tree of life stands in the garden for nothing; it serves no purpose; it is a supernumerary fact; its introduction into the narrative is inexplicable. But of the truth of this theory I have scarcely a doubt, and *this theory* furnishes a natural place for the tree.

Since I first gave publicity to this view I find that so distinguished a man as Hitchcock, in his book on "Religion and Geology," has suggested substantially the same theory of the functions of the tree of life.

It is, then, evident that, though created in a mortal condition, man was designed for immortality, and the means of securing that end was provided. It follows,

V. *That though natural death was not the penalty of sin, its actual occurrence was a consequence of sin.*

It is not the penalty of sin; for the penalty is the destruction of the man, soul and body, in hell, and not the mere separation of the soul and body—a state into which the redeemed enter as well as those who are lost. But it is a consequence of sin; for God had provided that man should not die. It is not, however, a *direct*, but an *indirect*, result of sin.

If the *direct* consequence of sin had not been arrested by the provision of a Redeemer, man would have sunk into hell, and that, perhaps, after having eaten of the fruit of the tree of life, so as to become immortal. But the direct stroke was averted for the time; the plan of salvation was introduced; a *second probation* was secured for man, in his fallen and depraved state; the whole economy of the divine government was adjusted to the condition of a fallen and redeemed creature; the administration was a departure from the ordinary processes of government. Hitherto good and evil had been kept apart by a strictly just penal administration; *now*, the Atonement is provided; now, mercy has place; processes of recovery are provided for the lost; depraved men have a day of grace; they are allowed to *live on the earth*, though in sin, that they may have space to repent.

The necessary consequence of this is a condition of *mixed good and evil* in the world. There is evil, for man is depraved; there is good, for he lives under the provisions of grace, and every man has the opportunity of repentance and recovery from his lost condition.

This condition of things is an anomaly in the history of the universe; and at the end of this administration, so exceptional, so anomalous, there will be a day of judgment, in which the whole period and every individual case will pass under revision in the presence of the assembled universe of intelligent beings, and God's administration of the affairs of the earth, in its plan, and in all its details, in every

individual case, will be fully justified in the presence of all his creatures.

To this condition of mixed good and evil, under the plan of salvation, natural death belongs. "By man came sin into the world, and death by sin"—natural death—not directly, as a penalty, but indirectly, as a consequence. It was not the immediate consequence of sin, but a more remote consequence—a part of that modified condition which supervened upon the fall and the redemption; for it was after both the fall and the promise of redemption that man was remitted to the law of mortality, by being removed from access to the tree of life. It was after the fall and after the promise of redemption that God said, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

When the probation of any individual man ends *he dies*, and that is the disposition which God makes of him from the end of his probationary term until the day of judgment; the soul is separated from the body, and the body returns to dust. No doubt, penal sufferings begin with the wicked immediately after death—possibly, sometimes, even before; but natural death is not, in its proper nature, any part of them; for the righteous, also, die. In the case of the wicked, sin is on them in the moment of death, and *that is the sting of death*; for the righteous, death is death, but it has no sting.

I repeat it, Natural death is simply a part of the mixed condition of good and evil that supervened upon the fall and the redemption, *and is the disposition which God makes of each man, from the end of his period of probation to the time of the final judgment.*

VI. *Suffering, in the condition of mixed good and evil in which man now exists, is not penal, but disciplinary and corrective.*

We are not now in a state of retribution, but of probation under a system of redeeming agencies, and the sufferings we undergo are the chastenings of a corrective discipline. This is the doctrine of the New Testament Scriptures. Whatever may be the fact with regard to brute beasts, I cannot doubt that in man's case physical evil is the effect of spiritual evil—suffering is due to sin; but at present we suffer under the reign of grace, and every thing that comes to us is designed to bring us to Christ.

There may be a penal significance in the suffering of the man who, in perverse impenitency, defeats the gracious purpose in his own case; but the *design* is gracious and saving in every instance. Death, indeed, ends probation, and, in the immediate fact, cannot conduce to the salvation of him who suffers it; but the solemn approach to it and its universal presence in the world are well calculated to produce that effect. Surely it was designed for this very purpose, and in thousands of instances conduces powerfully to that repentance which is unto life.

The whole course of human suffering, culminating in death, which is the end of all opportunity of repentance, is a most potential agency of grace. It sets the folly of sin in a clear, strong light, and is adapted by divine wisdom to a probationary state in the peculiar circumstances that man is now in. His probation contrasts strongly with that of the first man in his innocency, and even then his fears were

appealed to; how much more now, when the more generous motives are blunted by a depraved condition! It is necessary to startle him by pain, and warn him by the approach of the destroyer.

But, you reply, if death belongs to a corrective, and not a punitive, order of things, why should it be personified as an enemy? That can be no enemy which contemplates a beneficent effect.

The answer is plain. In a diseased condition, curative processes are often painful in the extreme; the dose is restorative in its ultimate purpose, but revolting in its first effect. The surgeon's knife, which removes the gangrened member, performs a work of beneficence—it saves life; yet the edge of it has ever the aspect of an enemy to the sufferer. “Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.” Though in the reign of grace evil is subdued to purposes of good, and every pang is made to play a part in the ministry of grace and life, yet the torture is none the less to present sensibility. Evil is an enemy in the present anguish of its effect, even when it serves the ends of grace.

Our world is full of enemies—no mere specters, but foes of mighty prowess, and in full armor; their frightful aspect startles us at every turn; the earth is overrun with them. The powers of darkness invade every scene and pillage every heart—

They throng the air, and darken heaven,
And rule this lower world.

It is, therefore, true that,

VII. *Though death is not penal, it is, in a very solemn sense, an enemy.*

Its approach is preluded by pain and terror; its presence is accompanied by the agonies of separation; our very nature revolts at it; it *violates* nature. Nature is life, and death assails it—does it violence. Though a gracious end is contemplated in its ravages, they *are ravages* none the less. But,

VIII. *The Destroyer of death has come.*

Everywhere, and in all ages, man has felt himself the helpless prey of innumerable and insatiable enemies; everywhere, and in all ages, humanity has cried out for a champion. Conscious of unseen and malignant hosts pressing upon him on all sides, and beleaguering him in every retreat, in his despair he cries out for the advent of supernal powers—gods or demigods—to take his part and destroy his destroyers. The work of Theseus and of Hercules must be done; monsters must be exterminated; the hydra must be destroyed; man must be delivered from the invasion of malignant powers. All mythology is an utterance of man's sense of impotency in the presence of diabolical enmities; it is his dim vision of the awful truth. Without the light of revelation he sees these malignant forms in mists and fogs, through a distorting medium, and in grotesque shapes, all the more appalling for the imperfect vision in which they appear. But they are not mere apparitions—they are actual and insatiable powers of darkness; and still, to this day, humanity shudders before their awful aspect.

But, blessed be God, One mighty to save has en-

tered the arena! The Son of God has championed our cause; single-handed, against the malignant horde of hell, he fronts them in man's behalf, and puts "all enemies under his feet;" before the majestic aspect of his brow they fall. But even for him it is no mere child's play; it is a fierce, yea, a bloody, conflict. At the outset, and for a moment, he himself went down, covered with blood; his visage was marred more than any man, and his countenance more than the sons of men. But, mustering the resources of Godhead, he came up again to the dread encounter; yet how strong the enemy! For near two thousand years he has kept the field against the Son of God. Intrenched in the depravities of the human heart, and sheltered under the ramparts of the perverse human will, he maintains a desperate defense against the advancing Conqueror.

But "*all enemies*" shall be put under him. That old serpent, the devil, and death, and hell, and sin, shall be cast down into the lake of fire; and death—death, in its lower, physical expression—natural death, shall be abolished; for he "hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel;" "and there shall be no more death."

IX. *The destruction of death will be the final achievement of Messiah.*

The resurrection of the dead will end the conflict. In that stupendous event the arena will be cleared; the field will be swept of the last enemy. "The redemption of the body" is the last fact in the recovery of redeemed men from all the consequences of

the fall. When the grasp of death upon their flesh is broken, the last vestige of the unhappy consequences of sin, so far as *they* are concerned, will disappear. It is not of the wicked that the apostle speaks here. Natural death will be destroyed for them, too—for they will be raised from the dead; but the resurrection will be no release nor relief for them—they will be raised to a more dreadful doom. But for them who believe on his name the resurrection will be the end of evil; for them death will be forever dead—his overthrow will be the last stroke of the great Champion and Deliverer, the last triumphant blow in behalf of his oppressed people. Then the chains of death will fall off, and the prisoners of the grave go free; the cry of a child at the couch of a dying mother will be heard no more; the wail of the wife gazing upon her dead husband and her orphaned children shall rend the air no more; never again shall a broken-hearted father, in convulsive sobs, exclaim, “O my son, my son! would God I had died for thee!” The tears shall be wiped away from their faces, neither shall there be any more crying, nor sorrow, nor any pain; for the former things are passed away.

Then the saved of the Lord shall “enter in through the gates into the city,” and “have right to the TREE OF LIFE.” “In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the TREE OF LIFE.”

Man is in the garden of delights again, with no flaming sword-point thrusting him back from the tree. He plucks the fruit, and eats, and feasts, and luxuriates, in the fullness of ETERNAL LIFE.

He *triumphs* in life. The crowned Conqueror of death gives his people a *crown* of life. Victors over death through him, they reign with him in life for evermore. Their hold of life is not feeble and dubious, as now; but, assured in the title of a divine conquest, they are regnant in the realm of life, "heirs of eternal life," "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ."

The Lord's Messenger.

SERMON XV

“Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me.” Mal. iii. 1.

JOHN THE BAPTIST was an itinerant preacher. “He came into all the country about Jordan, preaching.”

He was a popular preacher—that is to say, his preaching commanded the ear of the masses of the people; but you are not to understand that he was popular in any low sense of that word. I doubt if he was what your complacent critics would call a “good speaker.” No one would think of describing his sermons by the epithet “beautiful.” I cannot suppose that he had ever concerned himself about the *art* of oratory; and as to any *trick* of oratory, it were profane to think of it in connection with his preaching. He was *the Lord's messenger*, and was too full of his message to think of attitudes, and gestures, and inflections, and rounded periods. His hearers would not go away saying, “What a fine sermon!” but “What shall we do?”

I feel, upon reflection, that I have done the old messenger a wrong. *Popular*—the word has an impertinent sound when applied to such a man.

He had one theme: "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

The people were in expectation of the coming "kingdom," and he who announced it now already *at hand* had the key to the national heart. But he not only aroused the national enthusiasm by announcing the kingdom so long expected as at hand; he also denounced them as in a state unfit for its coming. *Repent!* prepare yourselves! lest the King should come to you in your sins.

They had been looking for the promised kingdom merely as the restoration of the national independence; it had for them merely a political significance; but John taught them that its coming required them to forsake their sins.

An indescribable awe filled their hearts. One word gave tone to all his preaching—*Repent*. That word made the nation tremble; it smote the ear with a divine power; conscience cried out under every stroke; the soul discovered its pollutions. *Repent!* The word was tricked out with no elocutionary art; it just came in its native, divine import.

The man of God traversed the wilderness reiterating the word *Repent*, and his very life and aspect gave a deeper meaning to the word. "His meat was locusts and wild honey." He was clothed with a single loose garment of the coarsest stuff, fastened about him with a strap of raw-hide. "And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of

a skin about his loins." Mark i. 6. He was not of this world; he was a prophet, and more than a prophet; he was the last and greatest prophet; he was the voice in the wilderness, crying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." He is the messenger going before the face of the Lord.

"And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins"—so wide-spread and profound was the effect of his ministry. Men, indeed, "mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not," and "the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem"—a formal commission—"to ask him, Who art thou?"

After a time he established himself at a certain place, and such was his power over the people that they flocked to him in countless multitudes, to hear him and be baptized by him, and were ready, beyond all doubt, to accept him even as Messiah. For himself, however, "he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ." When pressed with the question, Who art thou? "he said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the Prophet Esaias."

My purpose is to show *how* John prepared the way of the Lord—in what way his ministry was a preparation for Christ.

1. *The ministry of John was itself a fulfillment of prophecy*, and, as such, contributes to the completeness of prophetic testimony to the claims of Christ.

The number and definiteness of the predictions

concerning our Saviour are important considerations. The fulfillment of a single prediction might be disposed of by rational criticism, especially if the prediction were not at all circumstantial, and if the event did not answer very fully and exactly to the prediction, but only in a general and an indefinite way. But a large number of events given in prophecy, and realized circumstantially in their proper relation to each other, and in the predicted order of time, in the fulfillment, constitute a species of proof that must carry conviction to every candid mind; no criticism can break the force of it.

Every additional event, therefore, that enters into the Messianic prophecies adds greatly to the convincing power of the proof of the divine mission of our Lord; for the improbability of the fulfillment of *all* the prophecies concerning him is vastly augmented by every additional prophetic fact. One or two facts, which a false prophet should venture to announce, *might* find something corresponding to them in coming ages; but four or five events given by the prophet, with descriptive accuracy, and in a given relation to each other as to time and place, if they shall answer to the prophecy in every particular, must convince the world of the fact that the prediction came from a fountain of divine knowledge.

False prophets are, therefore, chary of their facts, and careful to give them in an enigmatical form of statement; but the prophecies concerning Christ are numerous, and are delivered with a fearless variety, as to time, and place, and circumstances, which would render any well-defined fulfillment impossi-

ble if they were but the hap-hazard vaticinations of a hair-brained fanatic, or the adventurous guesses of the impostor.

The circumstance of a predicted messenger going before Messiah, to prepare his way, adding as it does to the complexity of the net-work of prophetic events, renders fulfillment the more impossible upon the hypothesis of the uninspired character of the prophets, and at the same time constitutes, in case of fulfillment, an unanswerable proof at once of the inspiration of the seer and of the truth of the vision. No man who believes in the inspiration of the prophets can doubt the divinity of Christ.

As an additional link, then, in the chain of fulfilled prophecy, the ministry of John tends to prepare the way of Christ.

But he prepares the way of the Lord even yet more fully and effectually in the various functions of his own peculiar office.

2. *The preaching of John was such as properly preceded that of Christ.*

Christ was to announce the great fact of the new birth; John preached repentance. The relation between the two is plain and evident: the law goes before the gospel; Moses precedes Christ; the teaching of repentance anticipates the doctrine of the new birth. In other words, the ministry of John *prepares the way* for the ministry of Christ.

It would be but casting pearls before swine to announce the new birth in a world of depraved men, who had never been convinced of sin—men whose depravity had never been so much as touched by

any compunction—men in whom the inveteracy of natural evil had never been softened, and whose conscience had never been awakened to repentant sensibility. The sense of sin must precede the conscious want of a new life; we must know the evil of our own nature before we can feel the need of a change; the dispensation of repentance must go before the dispensation of the new birth.

True, repentance had been taught before John, as the work of grace had been taught by prophets before Christ came; but the mighty fact of the new creation was never fully brought into the light until the Great Teacher announced it, and gave it its final and full expression. So, also, was John, eminently above all who had preceded him, the prophet of repentance.

REPENT—this was the master-word of his ministry. With this one word he shook Judea to its center. He dealt with the dreadful fact of human sin; this was his theme, and he handled it in no empirical way; the treatment was thorough and faithful, and the people came almost *en masse*, and submitted themselves to his baptism, *confessing their sins*. He roused the whole nation from its self-complacent formalism; God's truth was turned with focal power upon human corruption, and men saw that awful spectacle—their own hearts—for the first time. The vision awakened remorse, and prostrated them in the dust, in shame and grief.

God does not temporize with sin. The gospel deals with it as a most deadly thing, which is not to be palliated nor covered up, but either punished with

eternal pains or purged away In the light of the gospel, God is implacable toward sin; he gives it no place, but brands it as the one thing which he abhors; it is the one thing upon which he looks with infinite hatred; the utmost power of speech fails to give adequate expression to the divine loathing of it. What torrents of denunciation are poured upon it in the Old Testament Scriptures! It is the one only thing upon which the wrath of God falls.

Salvation does not cloak sin, and excuse it with an amiable pity and allowance, but *destroys it*. The man in whom it is not exterminated is not saved. Though its power could be broken by nothing less than the death of the Incarnate Son of God, even *that* was not a sacrifice too great to express the imperious demand for its destruction. Yet sin is not extirpated by mere power; its seat is in the *will*, and the will is not carried by force; its choices are made in view of motives, and are free; it is addressed by motives either through the senses, or through the reason, or through faith. The appeal to the will, in behalf of sin, is made through the senses; the appeal in behalf of purity is made through the reason and faith; and herein is the philosophy of preaching. The preacher appeals to reason and faith, against the domination of the sensual nature. All effectual preaching is done with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; for, in a soul already under the power of sin, reason and faith are at such disadvantage, as against the senses, that they require the touches and quickenings of grace.

When grace prevails, repentance is the first effect.

Repentance is the soul's revolt against the dominion of sin, and its act of submission to God; in repentance it turns to God, and, rising at last to the high experience in which faith is supreme, it becomes receptive of the fullest measures of divine redeeming energy, and is transformed into the image of God by the mysterious processes of the new birth. The Creator recovers the alienated will to himself, not by force, but by love; he accomplishes the conquest of the soul through reason and faith, by the preaching of the cross and the ministry of the Spirit. In the nature of the case, repentance is the first form of consciousness, in its translation from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light, from the power of Satan to the service of the living God. It is repentance that casts off the yoke of the old master, and bows the neck to that of the new.

The ministry of John was, therefore, necessary. There must be in the process of the world's redemption not only a dispensation of the law, in a distinct historical relation to the dispensation of grace, but a dispensation of repentance in the same historical relation—the law, in an impressive announcement and publication of it, defining sin and condemning the sinner; the distinct and definite demand upon the sinner to recognize and bow to the sovereign exactions of the law in repentance; and last in time, the special disclosure of the method of grace, in which the full recovery and salvation of the *repentant sinner* are provided for and assured.

The ministry of John has the dignity and importance of a dispensation in the grand historical de-

velopment of the plan of salvation. He comes after Moses and before Christ. Moses condemns the world; John brings it to its knees, *self-condemned*; Christ, the Son of God, brings it pardon and the new life, through his own blood, restoring it at once to God and to law.

3. *The ministry of John involved the formality of a significant and impressive rite.* He committed his disciples to the great work of repentance by a solemn ablution. This gave his ministry such body and force as had great effect. He was no passing declaimer, making an irregular attack on the wickedness of his times; he had his commission from God, and gave form and volume to his work by the public washing of his followers with water.

This rite had a meaning to the Jew which it had acquired from the national and ecclesiastical history. In a solemn baptism they had their final deliverance from Egypt; it was the last act of that tremendous drama in which God led them out of bondage, with a high hand and with his holy arm; the waters parted for them, and, as they passed through the sea dry-shod, the clouds in the heavens above them "poured out water," while, to give highest effect, the terrors of the tempest were added; "the sky sent forth a sound." In the midst of such august ablutions of nature did God take this people to himself, to be his chosen people. Besides this, the Mosaic ritual contained "divers washings," all of which were intended to intimate the holiness of God and to symbolize the purity which he requires in those who serve him. "Sprinkling the unclean," which

“sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh,” serves to exhibit in a sensible way the saving efficacy of grace; for “how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, *purge your conscience from dead works*, to serve the living God?”

The people who heard John had been reared under this ritual, and understood the import of these washings—these baptisms. From the time when the people before Mount Sinai were required to wash their garments and purify their persons, because God was about to appear and to proclaim the law, they had been taught, in every possible form of instruction, that *sin is pollution*, and that it is infinitely odious to God; *that it must be cleansed away*, or he would break forth upon them in all the terrors of omnipotent anger. The leper was “unclean,” and he who touched him was also, by the contact, rendered unclean. Any dead thing, or any person who might touch it, was unclean, and the unclean person was to be kept separate and touch no one until he had gone through the formal process—the ritual of cleansing—until he had “washed himself,” in connection with impressive rites. To a people so trained John came, and “preached the baptism of repentance.” They were prepared for his doctrine; the “uncleanness” that he charged upon them was SIN; they must renounce it; they must abandon it; they must forsake it utterly; and to make the renovation formal, and the reformation binding to the last degree, they must be “baptized with water.” They were devoting themselves to a life of purity, and in

so doing submitted themselves to the rite which was the symbol of purity—the washing of water.

4. *This man's preaching was practical.* In his doctrine repentance was not a mere sentiment, but a change of character, decisive, thorough, radical.

How he stripped all disguises from the heart of the hypocrite, and laid it bare in its rottenness! “O generation of vipers, who hath warned *you* to flee from the wrath to come?” It was not to the simple-hearted common people that he addressed these words, but to the Pharisees and the Sadducees—pretentious, proud, insincere. “Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance;” let a thorough change of life prove your sincerity; trust in no vain ground of hope; “think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father;” that will do you no good; every man must stand in his own character. Judgment is at hand; the ax is ready, lying at the root of the trees, and “every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.” There is no alternative but that—repentance and *fruit meet for repentance*, or the fire. The test is evermore a practical one. The tree is known by its fruit.

The people said, “*What shall we do?*” and the great prophet of repentance replied, “He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.” The publicans were to cease from their extortions, and the soldiers from their violence, falsehood, and discontent.

He feared the face of no man, but dealt as plainly

with the tetrarch as with any common man, reproving him "for Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done." This cost him his liberty and, at the last, his life. He was a martyr in his testimony against sin. It was well; for the testimony receives great emphasis from the blood shed in support of it. So the greatest of the prophets perished only to leave an imperishable name. He had done a work for all ages; he had prepared the way of the Lord; by the dispensation of repentance he had prepared the world for the dispensation of life in Christ.

5. *He prepared the way by affirming the infinite superiority of Christ.*

After he had so profoundly impressed the public mind that the people were ready even to receive him as Messiah himself, he said: No, I am not the Christ; he is coming; he is near; you will see him now, immediately; he is greater than I—so much greater that I am not worthy to unloose the latchet of his shoes—to perform the most menial offices about his person. Great as they held John to be, he was as nothing when compared to the coming One. What, then, must that One be? If the voice in the wilderness had commanded their hearts with such power, what must he be of whom the voice was only the herald? What must be the glory and exaltation of him whose shoes this mighty prophet was not worthy to carry for him?

6. *But the contrast would appear in the ministry, no less than in the person, of Christ.*

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repent

ance; . . . he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire."

It is the difference between the shadow and the substance, between the human symbol and the divine fact. I baptize with water, but he with the Holy Ghost; I deal with the material side of things, he with the spiritual; I am a man, he is God; I precede him, to express in the outward form the work he will do in the inward life; I am a prophet, he is the Lord of the prophets, and the End of prophecy.

How strange it is that in the terminology of so many Christian teachers the word baptism should be confined to its accidental import! that the work of John should be given precedence of the work of Christ! "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." Thus he sits as a refiner's fire and as a purifier of silver; thus he whose name is called Jesus saves his people from their sins. All this, indeed, was preintimated in the baptism—the washing of water—in which John committed his disciples to repentance; that is, to a struggle against sin—to a supreme effort after *purity*, which the washing represents, and the gift of the Holy Ghost effectuates. But Christ's baptism is as much greater than John's as Christ is greater than John, and as the Holy Ghost is greater than water—as much greater as the Creator is greater than the thing which he has made. So, by putting himself and his ministry in contrast with Christ and his work, the prophet prepares us for the full divine significance of the *real baptism*. Whenever the word is used without

an expletive in the context, or in the text, it ought always to be understood of the work of the Holy Spirit—the baptism administered by the Lord himself, as in Rom. vi. 3, 4; Col. ii. 12; and Eph. iv. 5.

John preached repentance, and pledged the people to it in baptism; he could do no more. He was the depositary of no creative energies; he could lead men toward God, but could never command the Spirit; the new creation was beyond his power. The work of God can be done by none but God, and of that work he was but a human instrument. He could not effectuate the soul's renewal in grace; he could not command the powers of an endless life; his ministry began and ended in "the baptism of repentance." From that point he was impotent as any other man; he prepared the way, but Christ must consummate the work.

"He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire."

In Christ is the life of men—the eternal life; in him all fullness dwells; creative energies reside in him; he has the Spirit without measure; he approaches the inward life of men, not by preaching only, but by an immediate divine working. He not only influences the soul through the *media* by which men influence each other, but touches it at the very roots and sources of life. He raises his people from spiritual death by the mighty working of the same power by which he himself was raised up from the dead. He is mighty to save, able to save to the uttermost, all who come to God by him. By the Holy Spirit of power he effectuates the grace secured by

the merit of his blood. Having paid the price of our redemption, he is now sitting on the right hand of power, to bestow the gifts he has bought for man. He sends the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, to work in man that renewal of his nature without which, even though the Lord was crucified, he must perish forever.

The work of the Spirit is, indeed, life from the dead. Through it all who receive Christ have power to become the sons of God; they are "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God"—"born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever."

This is the new birth; it is the beginning of a new life—life on the spiritual plane. We are constituted sons of God, not by adoption only, but by actual regeneration and affiliation of nature; we are "*made partakers of the divine nature*, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." The "old man"—the depraved nature inherited from Adam—"is crucified," and the "new man"—that is, the Christ-life—is "raised up" in us; Christ is formed within, the hope of glory, so that the life that we now live *in the flesh* is not the life *of the flesh*, but of the faith of the Son of God. "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Christ is *formed within*—that is, the life that is in Christ for men is given to us, and becomes the controlling vital power of our existence.

This is the hidden mystery which the ages and generations knew not, and which, even now that it

is revealed in Christ, the carnal mind, the natural man, does not know, and cannot, for it is "spiritually discerned." It is the work of him who, as John announced, would baptize men with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. The effect of it is *holiness in personal character*—the purgation of human nature from sin. Baptism symbolizes it, for water purifies; fire symbolizes it more deeply. What water cannot cleanse, fire can; water cleanses the surface, but fire permeates the mass. Adhering taints and stains are removed by water; but in metals, base inhering substances pervading the mass can be purged away only by fire; what it cannot purify it destroys; the crucial test is the test of fire. Christ purifies all who receive him by a power that is inward, searching, all-subduing, like fire; it is the fire of divine love and life. In repentance and faith the divine transformation takes place; Christ is received; sin is destroyed; the "divine nature" comes in; but where Christ is rejected by impenitency and unbelief, the fire destroys. His "fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." The fire of God is either a purifying or a consuming flame. "Our God" not only "sits as a purifier of silver," but is also a "consuming fire." When the Holy Ghost fell on the disciples, his symbol was fire: "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, *like as of fire*, and it sat upon each of them; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost."

7 *So, we see, John prepared the way of Christ by announcing and defining the nature of his work.*

It is to be observed, especially, and is matter of great importance, that John, whose office was to introduce Christ, undertook, in announcing him, to define his work. What Christ came for, what he had to do in the world, is all summed in that statement, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." He came to save men, and in this fact personal salvation is effectuated.

Precisely the equivalent of this is our Lord's own announcement of his mission to Nicodemus, who had confessed his belief in Christ as a Teacher come from God, and who was before him in the attitude of one inquiring what his doctrine was. The Lord answered, without reserve, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." This one sentence suggests, in a compendious form, the whole truth as it is in Jesus. It was as much as if he had said, I have come to introduce the kingdom of God into the world, and into that kingdom no man can enter except he be born of the Spirit; but this new birth, by the power of the Spirit, is the object of my mission; for I will pour out the Spirit upon all flesh, in a baptism of renovation and life.

So both he and John agree that the baptism of the Spirit was the one great work he came to do.

What this work is, in its moral effect, we have already seen; but it remains to be said that the character of Christ's work appears in its fullest light as it is set in comparison and contrast with John's. This contrast is drawn by John himself. The personal contrast between John and Christ I have al-

ready given, and also, in some measure, delineated the contrast between the mission of the one and the other. But let us look at it more definitely.

The one baptized with water, the other with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.

The one preached repentance; the other announced and introduced the divine fact of the new birth.

The one preached the kingdom of heaven at hand; the other was the King himself, come to set up the kingdom.

The one dealt with human symbols, the other with divine realities.

The one was the humble messenger, going before to prepare the way; the other was the august Son of God, for whom the way was prepared.

John's work, indeed, was great. He had all a prophet's power; his voice was an inspired trumpet-blast; prophecy culminated in him; he was the focus of all the prophetic light that had shined upon the world from the beginning, and turned it full upon the person of the Lord. But his greatness was not in himself; it was only in his relation to Christ. His work was nothing except as it revealed the coming One, but to do *that* was the most signal honor that ever distinguished a mortal name. He stands in history glorified by the flood of radiance reflected upon him from the Lord of life; he was the immediate herald of him who brought life and immortality to light, in a world lying in the wicked one. Into a world enveloped in the smoke of the pit, where life was canopied by despair, and death

rioted in a feast of souls, the Life was coming, and his messenger was the dawn of his approach.

8. *In John prophecy came into actual contact with the person of the Redeemer.*

In the midst of a vast concourse Jesus came into the presence of John, who pointed him out to the people, and exclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" The prophetic testimony of all the ages fixed on him, and would vindicate his claim; but here the index was turned upon his very person, and the chosen messenger, the chief of all the prophets, singled him out and announced him to the world. It was the last word of prophecy, whose scattered echoes were collected into this voice.

9. *Christ himself was baptized by John, and in the act was avouched to be the Son of God.*

John was startled by the demand of Jesus for baptism at his hands; that *he* should baptize the Lord seemed to him out of the question. "*I* have need to be baptized of *thee*, and comest thou to me?" How strange! It reverses the order of propriety. How calm was the reply of Christ! "Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." His word, however quiet the utterance, was invincible. "Then he suffered him."

"To fulfill all righteousness." These words have occasioned no little controversy. Some have supposed that Christ regarded his baptism as a formal, ceremonial induction into the priestly office; but I have never been able to see the force of the arguments given in support of that view.

The truth seems to me to be about this: The incarnate Redeemer submitted to the conditions of humanity without reserve. He rendered filial obedience to Joseph and Mary, thus submitting to domestic obligations; he paid the tithe, and rendered obedience to both ecclesiastical and civil authority; he was circumcised, as any Jewish infant; he fulfilled *all* righteousness, claiming no exemption from any obligation. Now, John's baptism was divinely ordained, and, as he was man, he would submit to *that*, as he did to every ordinance of God.

True, the *significance* of it in his case was not the same as in other cases, but was altogether exceptional and peculiar. He was not "baptized unto repentance;" he was the one sinless Man. What the immediate purpose in his case was we are not left to conjecture. See John i. 31-34.

The general object was that "he should be made manifest to Israel," and several facts conspired to this end.

First. John had been divinely notified that when Messiah should come to his baptism the Holy Spirit should be seen, in the form of a dove, descending upon him.

Second. Upon this sign John received him, and avouched him to the people.

Third. The bodily form in which the Spirit descended was, no doubt, visible to all the people who were present.

Fourth. "The heavens were opened unto him," and from above the cleft sky a voice descended, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well

pleased." Thus the Eternal Father avouched him to the world.

Besides this, in the baptism of our Lord the symbol and the reality touch each other. John i. 33: "And I knew him not; but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." Thus the symbolism of John's ministry expressed itself upon the very person of Christ; and it was fitting that it should be so. When the baptismal waters had come upon him, the Holy Spirit also descended on him, indicating that this was he who should baptize with the Holy Ghost. The shadow and the substance were seen together.

How thoroughly John had done his work of preparing the people to receive Christ appears in a striking incident. Our Lord, in a wonderful expression of his personal majesty and authority, drove out all who had established themselves in the temple to sell and buy, and overturned the tables of the money-changers. The miracle of it was that they should submit to be driven out by any one man. There must have been an immeasurable outgoing of personal power from him, or they would have resisted. What right had he, coming from Galilee, a mere individual, to interfere with this traffic, so convenient to all parties, so lucrative to those engaged in it, and established by custom for so long as to give it prescriptive right? But they cowered and fled before him, unable to withstand the majesty of his brow.

The chief priests and elders, however, upon his next appearance in the temple, asked him, "By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?" He replied, "I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying If we shall say, From heaven, he will say unto us Why did ye not then believe him? but if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus, and said We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things."

If they acknowledged John to be a prophet, their question was answered; for John authenticated Jesus. Surely he whose shoe's latchet John was not worthy to unloose had authority to cleanse the temple. But such was the hold John had upon the people that they dared not deny his inspiration; "they feared the people."

No doubt John's testimony to Christ, and the hold he had upon the public mind, explains, in part, the rapid spread of the gospel in Jerusalem and Judea after the ascension of the Lord. The people knew that John had declared Jesus to be the Christ, and they "held John to be a prophet." The life and miracles of Jesus had confirmed the testimony of John. No doubt his death, public and dreadful as it was, and occurring at the feast of the passover, when so many from all Judea were present to witness it, had filled the country with awe. Multitudes

were in a state of mind most favorable to the announcement that he had been raised from the dead. In a few weeks the Church in Jerusalem numbered five thousand, while the word of God grew mightily, and prevailed. Very soon the city was filled with the doctrine. Still "believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." A multitude of sick, out of the cities round about Jerusalem, came and were healed. Still a little later, "the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." To what extent the influence of John's ministry had prepared the public mind for this instant reception of Christ of course we cannot know, but that it was an important factor there can be no doubt. He had, indeed, effectually prepared the way of the Lord.

How ready John's disciples were to accept Christ is evident from the case of Apollos (Acts xviii. 24-26), and also from the case of the twelve disciples whom Paul found at Ephesus, who had been baptized "unto John's baptism." Acts xix. 1-7. These all received the gospel with the utmost readiness and docility, being prepared by the influence of John.

Humanly speaking, this eminent success of the gospel, at the very first, in Judea and Jerusalem, was of the greatest importance. Christianity was just now beginning the invasion of the world, and the campaign opened gloriously. These first victories inspired every soldier, and gave great moral force. The movement acquired such momentum as

made it irresistible. It instantly gathered resources sufficient to support the boldest and most adventurous enterprises; it established itself upon a base of operations from which it might reach the ends of the earth; it enlisted recruits who would be chieftains to bear its banner in triumphant combat throughout the world. The greatest and most renowned of all was Saul of Tarsus. To whatever extent the ministry of John prepared Judea for these achievements, the Church is indebted to him in all time for the momentum which gave it sufficient impulse to match and subdue its enemies, and to establish itself permanently in the world as the greatest moral force of society.

To the personal fortunes of the great messenger the Christian heart can never be indifferent. He was in the public eye but a short time. The word of God came to him in his obscurity in the wilderness, and under its irrepressible impulse he emerged into power, and became at once the most conspicuous figure in all Syria; but upon the baptism of the Lord he immediately fell back into comparative obscurity. Removing from Bethabara to Enon, he still preached and baptized; but Jesus "made and baptized more disciples than John," and "there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying"—that is, about the baptism. Perhaps the Jews taunted them upon the decadence of their master's ministry; and perhaps, from honest curiosity, or possibly with a touch of malice, thinking to excite his jealousy, they "came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee be-

yond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him."

If he had been a self-conscious man he would have manifested a sense of rivalry and some feeling of failure and chagrin; but there was never a nobler nature on earth, save that of the Lord whose messenger he was. He lived not for himself, but for his Lord; the triumph of Jesus was his triumph. He vindicates himself against all suspicion of ambitious motives. John iii. 27-31. What he had received had been given him from heaven. "Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him." I never put forth any, the slightest, personal pretension, as though I was the principal figure. No; it is the Bridegroom that hath the Bride, and I am only the humble friend of the Bridegroom, serving about his person. Mine is not the triumph of him who comes to take the Bride to himself, but the joy of him, the friend and servitor, who hears the Bridegroom's voice. Now I stand and hear the voice of this heavenly Bridegroom, come to claim and take the Bride. My triumph is in his triumph; my joy is in the mightier joy of his voice. He that cometh from above is above all; I am only of the earth, and must decrease, but he must increase. The friend of the bridegroom is nothing after the brief offices of the hour have been performed, but passes out of sight and leaves the bridegroom the center of all eyes, the object of all regard; yet is he there, in a corner, unobserved, unthought-of, rejoicing in the bridegroom's joy. "This my joy, therefore, is fulfilled."

Noble spirit! consciously nothing, merging thyself so completely into the Lord!

For a moment we are sad, as we see the great prophet pass into the background, but only for a moment. Let us congratulate him! The aspirations of his life are consummated; he lived only to make ready for the Bridegroom, and now *he* has come. It is enough; the "friend" is satisfied; the long-expected voice is the fruition of his toil.

In all true and deep experience *self* is lost in God, and there is no better test and standard of the Christian life. God is all in all; we are nothing. In the deepest experiences of the child of God, he thinks nothing of himself, but only of God. Not in his own honors and successes does he triumph, but only in his all-glorious Lord.

The hero-prophet went into prison, we may well believe, without a sigh. He must *decrease*; but what of that? The Lord had come! and in the prison John heard of his mighty works. Prison-walls could not shut out from his ear the voice of the Bridegroom; and now he lived only to hear that. That voice could turn a dungeon into heaven. What a glorious independence is that of the man whose happiness is not in time and the things of sense, but in God! The loss of money, or health, or reputation, or pleasure, is nothing; these are but the *accidents* of his life. God can never be wrested from him, and God is the very Source of his life.

But why this deputation of his disciples to Jesus, with the doubt, "Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?" Was the doubt his? or was

it only that his disciples required confirmation? Possibly, for a moment he was in temptation—for he was only a man; but it seems most likely to me that the object was to give assurance to the faith of his disciples. The answer was decisive; and we can imagine the ineffable peace that fell upon his heart with the words, “Tell John” of all the miracles you have witnessed, and that “the poor have the gospel preached unto them.” Perhaps this was the last time the Bridegroom’s voice fell upon his ear; but O it was heavenly sweet!

This incident gave occasion to Christ’s testimony concerning John; for even John did not escape criticism. The most austere purity will find envious tongues to carp at it. John, with the garment of camel’s hair, subsisting on insects and the wild honey he found in the wilderness, was charged with being inspired by a demon. Christ came eating and drinking—that is, with divine self-control he enjoyed the good gifts of the Father—and they falsely said, He is a wine-bibber and a companion of sinners. Henceforth let Virtue give herself no concern to clear herself from the slanders of envious men—it is her doom to suffer this. The justification of the righteous is with God, and Jesus cleared the fame of his faithful servant. True, the slanders were light as the babbling, bantering speech of children in the market-place, in responsive accusation of each other; yet it was meet that the servant should be vindicated by his Lord.

“What went ye out into the wilderness to see?”
Only a twelve-month gone you all forsook your

homes—you left your fields and shops, and, with your wives and children, flocked pell-mell into the wilderness. “What went ye out for to see?” It was no rustle of a reed shaken by the wind, but a voice which was an echo of God’s voice, and which dominated your souls with a sovereign and irresistible tone; it was no elegant lounge about kings’ palaces, the noblest endeavor of whose genius is to dress well, and who “can give his whole mind to the fashion of a neck-tie,” but a prophet, and more than a prophet. The man whose majestic voice had caused a moral earthquake in Judea, and whose magnetism had drawn the populace into the wilderness, never twirled a dainty walking-stick, nor sported a gold chain. The stuff that he was made of was of a texture too divine for such frivolities. The puppet of the palace could never call a nation into the wilderness.

Ignominiously, in his cell, and at the malignant caprice of a base woman, John perished. The bloody head was given to the voluptuous dancing damsel, and by her flippantly handed to the wicked mother. The calm, dead face was, no doubt, insulted by the termagant Herodias and her heartless daughter, and then, perhaps, publicly exposed at the palace gate, while the headless trunk was reverently borne by his disciples to its burial. But neither the tenderness of friends nor the malice of enemies could reach the crowned hero, now. He was with God, resting from his labors, and to be followed by his works, evermore listening to the voice of the Bridegroom.

The Lord's-day in the Family.

SERMON XVI.

"Keep the Sabbath-day to sanctify it, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee." Deut. v. 12.

IN a household where the Spirit of Christ reigns, there are already, on the afternoon of Saturday, signs of the approaching Lord's-day. Domestic labor is anticipated, and, as far as possible, disposed of, so that the day of rest and worship may be relieved, to the utmost extent, of secular cares and occupations. Meats are prepared and bread is baked, to be served cold on the hallowed day. The wardrobe is put in readiness, and the house, as far as may be, in order. Thoughtful prearrangement anticipates the coming day in every practicable way. In the midst of all this, reverent incidental remarks drop every here and there from the lips of the pious housewife that show how deeply she appreciates the blessed Sabbath. Thus the holy day casts a hallowed, radiant shadow upon the day preceding.

Now all things are prepared. The "six days'

work is done." The feeling of rest is already apparent in the aspect and tone of the domestic group at the fireside. It has settled at once upon the kitchen and the drawing-room. The Bible is in hand. The Sunday-school lesson is conned over with reference to maps, and commentaries, and Bible dictionaries. The evening worship is offered, and now in the darkened house the inmates fall into repose with thoughts of God and his law, and a self-distrustful hope in Christ mellowing and chastening every heart.

The morning of the first day of the week dawns; the family is astir, but there is no haste, no bustle; the toilet is made quietly; movements in the kitchen and in the dining-room are attended with less noise than on other days; the simple repast costs but little labor; the spirit of the fourth commandment seems to be diffused through the whole house; the morning worship is free from all hurry, and more impressive than on common days; God is imminent in the scene; the awe of him is upon all hearts—not an oppressive, but an elevating and purifying, emotion.

There is no talk of prices and per cents at the breakfast-table, and no hurrying off to business. If the flow of conversation is less free than usual, it has better volume, and comes from deeper sources. The sewing-machine is off in a remote corner—patterns and fashion-plates out of sight. Toys and playthings are in the closet; and even the house-dog moves more leisurely, and has a more quiet look, than is his wont.

Among laboring people the change is very marked. There is no inexorable demand on this day for breakfast at five o'clock—no uneasy haste to be at the scene of toil a mile distant by six, lest wages should be docked. The morning repose is a little more protracted than on the working days, and the simple repast enjoyed more leisurely. The house is in better order; both parents and children enjoy a change of garments, and have a sense of cleanliness and comfort which conduce to the happiest effect. The great mass of men in city and country must be laboring people. It is not possible that this should be otherwise. No social or political millennium can ever set humanity free from the dominion of toil. The decree is irrevocable: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." In view of this partly, no doubt, the Infinite Father "made the Sabbath *for man*." Even in its lowest aspect, as it brings release from labor one day in seven, it is a boon of inestimable value.

But to the laborer and his family it brings a blessing yet richer in its civilizing tendencies; it brings to them the Church, the Sunday-school, and the opportunity of reading; it opens to them the whole region of Christian truth, and raises their life out of that sordid condition to which it would be hopelessly reduced by unrelieved, continuous labor; they are humanized and exalted by it; it brings those conditions that refine the taste and quicken the sensibilities; it furnishes the opportunity of acquiring knowledge, and that class of knowledge, especially, which most elevates our nature; it touches life with

lights which give it a high significance, and a value which it could never acquire from the corn-field or the work-shop. Imperfectly as the Lord's-day is observed amongst us, no one can question that the civilization of our country is at a point incomparably above what would be possible if this day were blotted from the calendar, or its observance entirely obliterated from the hearts and habits of the people. Children grow up better informed and better trained, incomparably so.

But its true value is in its purely religious character, and in this respect it is a peculiar treasure to the poor. Others may make opportunities of worship at their convenience, but those whose daily bread comes of daily toil must have a *Sabbath*, or be doomed to a life which is only of the earth earthy. They must be remitted to the dominion of the flesh. The problem of life for them must be given in the three paltry questions, "What shall I eat? what shall I drink? and wherewithal shall I be clothed?" Without the Sabbath, scarcely a ray of hallowed light could fall upon the humble hearth-stone, or irradiate the domestic scene. Children would be born only to be fed until they could labor, and then to labor until they must die. From the cradle to the grave life must grope in unmitigated gloom. No sustaining hope to aid it in its weariness, no high motive to quicken its aspirations, no divine trust to soften its asperities, home could be scarcely better than a kennel or a sty.

For there must be time and means of acquiring the knowledge of God in order to any actual spirit-

ual life among men. The purity and joy of the divine life are not attained without an effort; the Christian character is not formed at hap-hazard; the sanctities of religion are not realized in the absence of their proper conditions. Childhood must enjoy divine culture, or there can be no Christian maturity. But we know there can be no divine culture in the home that is visited by no Sabbath. The Lord's-day must bring all its holy meaning to the children of our country, to the children of the cottage and of the hovel, or religion will perish out of the land.

But not to the poor only is this day a priceless treasure. The man of business and of affairs requires the relief which it affords, and the opulent household is in equal need of an oft-recurring summons to appear consciously before God. Luxury, no less than toil, tends to sensuality. The holy touch and suggestion of the Sabbath are required no less in the mansion than in the hovel. Sordid pleasures shut God out of the soul even more effectually than sordid toil. The concentrated Sabbath utterance of divine things is equally indispensable in both cases. To break the power of earthiness and sensuality over the soul, God must come into every house, and have exclusive possession, once a week at least. One day in seven must be his; all its pleasures and employments, its reading and conversation, must contemplate him. Childhood must feel itself bathed in the Sabbath atmosphere, and be saturated with heavenly influences, at intervals as brief as those of the hebdomadal period. With a

prevalent Christian tone in the family from day to day, and the exclusive consecration of one day in seven to God, the child can scarcely fail of such effect upon his conscience as to lead him to Christ.

No doubt a really intelligent piety is conscious of the consecration of all time and all labor to God; yet there are immediate secondary ends in view in all ordinary employments, and the child is scarcely capable of such elevation as to refer secular avocations to God. But in the occupations of the Lord's-day, the immediate and palpable significance is perceived by a child that is scarcely yet removed from its infancy, and the holy day becomes the vehicle of holy thoughts and the occasion of heavenward impulses at a period so early that no memories of mature life will go back to a time antedating them. Thus life becomes preoccupied by Christian truth and a devout consciousness through the means of the Lord's-day in the family. Nor can any man, however skilled in spiritual dynamics, calculate the measure of these moral forces in all after life.

What the Sabbath is to be under the roof, or whether, indeed, there shall be any Sabbath under the roof, must depend upon the head of the family. The husband and wife must concur in the domestic administration in order to any effectual Sabbath-keeping. Both must have a sensitive conscience toward God, or the Sabbath will not be a delight. This first and capital condition secured, there must be, then—

1. Great firmness. There will be much to resist in order to secure the Sabbath against invasion. In

the circle of a man's acquaintances there will be many disposed to social visiting on that day, and they will break up all feeling of the sacred character of the day both by the labors of hospitality and the indiscriminate introduction of topics of conversation. Now, to resist this no small amount of *courage* is necessary. For want of this courage on the part of Christian men, the Sabbath is absolutely driven out of many a home, and the day devoted simply to social pleasure. In this way multitudes of children are defrauded of all inheritance in the Lord's-day. It becomes every child of God to set his face like a flint in this matter. It were infinitely better to alienate all his friends than keep them at the expense of a domestic Sabbath. Friends are either a great blessing or a great curse. When they come between us and God they are a great curse. Unless they will stand aside and leave our relations with our Creator undisturbed, we must break with them, no matter who they may be. The right eye must be sacrificed when the soul's safety requires it. Christ will be absolute Lord, and whatsoever it may be that opposes him must be surrendered. We must stand like a rock against all invasion of our Sabbaths. Nothing can compensate us or our children for the expulsion of the hallowed day.

Much firmness will be required, also, in the government of children so as to secure the sanctity of the Lord's-day under the roof. They may feel the needed restraint to be oppressive, and resist it. This will certainly be the fact in those cases where the home government is weak, and parental author-

ity is not steadily maintained. Youthful life is effervescent, and a quiet day seems quite intolerable. But when the Sunday-school has consumed an hour and a half, and two services have been attended in the house of God, the enforcement of quietness in the intervals is not unreasonable. The restraint is not greater, in fact, than is necessary for the proper assertion of the authority of God upon the sensibilities of the child.

The fact of the sovereignty of God must be delivered with great force and in supreme expression upon a child, or there can be no effectual preparation of him for a truly religious life. In American life there is an exaggerated idea of personal liberty; so much so that even the magistracy of God is not felt in its infinite force. The consequence is a superficial piety on the part of many Church-members. Many who are by no means hypocrites are yet very shallow Christians; their religious life is not at all pronounced; they have a very dilute conscience toward God. The trouble is, they have never conceived justly of the absolute power and authority of God.

As in the history of religion, so in personal experience: Sinai must come before Calvary; the ministry of the law must precede the ministry of grace; the condemning power must be felt before the forgiving love can be experienced. The law must enter, and reveal my sin, before ever I can know Christ. He is nothing to me until I feel myself to be dead under the law.

If the Sabbath law is unwelcome to restive child-

hood, intelligent parental authority will not forbear from its requirements on that account; and while unnecessary severity will be avoided, *nothing—absolutely nothing*—will be allowed that may mar the holy character of the day. *It is God's day*, and the well-informed Christian parent will know how to give full effect to that great fact in the conscience of the child.

There will be no tolerance of any thing that will tend to dilute the sense of the absolute right of God in the sacred hours of this day. It must be delivered with full effect upon the child's conscience, and if the restraint be felt to be painful, this very fact will conduce to the effect.

Depend upon it, great firmness is required in parental administration. A thousand instances of childish restlessness and caprice, a thousand cases of social solicitation and urgency, will subject the authority of the Christian parent to a heavy strain. The strongest tenacity will be found necessary to resist the pressure.

But the expression of executive authority in the domestic domain need not be harsh, and must not be, if the highest ends of discipline are to be secured. The firmest maintenance of authority is gentle in its tone. There must be no passion; passion is irregular, fitful; where it once enters, the reins are held by an unsteady hand. The home government must be one of love, and whatever of sternness there is in it must rest on *principle* and *conviction*, not on passion; it must express itself quietly, but persistently. The greatest strength is

the least noisy. A perfect control is secured, not by occasional outbursts of authoritative assertion, but in the quiet strength that never allows a case of disobedience. In this state of things, authority soon becomes so habitual on one side, and submission on the other, that collisions rarely or never occur.

Only where this is the habit of the home-life can the ideal Sabbath be realized.

At the same time, the wise parent will find happy expedients to heighten the Sabbath spirit by relieving it of all tendency to *ennui*. Children are readily interested in Bible narratives. The Old Testament abounds in story and biography that may be made at once, from the lips of the mother, to beguile and sanctify many an hour of the holy day. Juvenile religious literature abounds, and the Sabbath affords the happiest opportunity to cultivate a taste for profitable reading. In addition to firmness, there is, then, necessary, also,

2. Intelligence and thoughtful attention on the part of parents. All proper pains must be taken to secure the spirit of the Sabbath. Let children learn the history of the day—both its first and its later history. The ear of a child will drink in the history of the creation with a feeling of wonder and delight which may serve the highest purpose; for there can be no better preparation of the young heart for the doctrine of the Sabbath—"God rested from all his work." This statement, falling upon an ear just opened by the story of the creation, will fix itself in the memory and awaken the deepest reverence.

Then there is that other story of the greater work

of God—the work of redemption. The cross evermore magnetizes the ear of childhood. Well might Christ call little children to him, for none respond to his call so sensitively as they. They stand weeping by when he is taken down and wrapped in linen, and laid in the new tomb; they stand there in thought and faith, early on the morning of the third day, ere it is yet light, and see the women coming with sweet spices to embalm the sacred body; while the women are yet in the distance, they see the angel descend and “roll away the stone;” they see the Lord “rise from the dead,” to be the Saviour of mankind, and to become the author of a new creation. And now the Sabbath is the first day of the seven, instead of the last. It commemorates the finished work of atonement, as heretofore it commemorated the finished work of creation.

Most deeply susceptible of all this is the heart of a child; and thus, under wise and simple-hearted teaching, will all the sacred import of the day diffuse itself through the soul. It is the Lord's-day—the day of the week on which he rose from the dead.

Thus may the Lord's-day, whenever it recurs, be made to take entire possession of the Christian household, and to be welcomed as the sign and witness of the love of God; and thus the day itself becomes the vehicle of all-saving truth—the concentrated expression and utterance of the gospel. Its hallowed hours bear in upon all hearts the name of God and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Music, too, may be made to add both to the proper effect and hallowed pleasures of the day. No tongue

can express the effect of Christian hymns, such as our lyric literature abounds with, sung by an assembled family on the Lord's-day. Each heart mellowed by domestic affections, each conscience quickened by the associations of the day, every voice will have a richer tone, and such a hymn as this—

Alas! and did my Saviour bleed?
And did my Sovereign die?
Would he devote that sacred head
For such a worm as I?

will sink down into the soul, diffuse itself through the life, and enter into the staple of thought and feeling, so vitally as to become a most efficient causative force in the formation of character. So may the history of the Sabbath be set to most melting strains, and its memories interwoven with all the fibers of the soul by the trill and vibration of sacred melody, when it wafts in upon the spirit such words as these:

He rises, who mankind has bought
With grief and pain extreme;
'T was great to speak the world from naught;
'T was greater to redeem.

In fact, our Christian hymnology is rich in compositions that fall in with and heighten the Sabbath consciousness.

As to the actual degree of restraint to be imposed on children of various ages, the conscientious Christian parent will be the judge, and the general rules already given will be a sufficient guide.

If there be any call to serve the sick in the neighborhood, or to relieve the poor, we have ample war-

rant of our Saviour to do what may be required. The object of these labors gives them a hallowed character, and constitutes a lawful claim upon Sabbath time, so that they do not violate, but rather heighten, the sanctity of the day. But otherwise, where money-making is the object, the same employment would degrade the day, for it belongs to God.

In holy duties let the day,
In holy comforts, pass away.

Two institutions which are coeval with the creation of man remain to the present time—marriage and the Sabbath. They have descended to us from Eden; the odors of paradise are in them both—perfumes richer than the breath of Oriental spices; they are the only surviving memorials of the time of man's perfect innocence—the only traces that remain of the condition of sinless purity and love from which mankind have so deeply fallen. These both link us to the time when the Lord God came in the cool of the day, and talked with the first man and his wife in an unsullied home.

From marriage the family takes its existence, and the family is the corner-stone of all order, social and civil, and the fountain of all civilization. Conjugal and parental love furnish all the motives which insure that training and education of children without which society would be a mere chaos and government an iron despotism. Without marriage, the father of scattered and unknown children could feel no greater interest in his offspring than the beasts that perish; a condition lower than that of the sav-

age, and more brutal than that of the brute, must result; for the family, with its pride and interest in a recognized offspring, exists even among savages. The resources of the mother suffice to nourish the infant brute; but without the father's contribution, either from the plow or from the chase, not one human infant in a thousand could reach maturity.

But let one man and one woman be consecrated to each other in the exclusive proprietorship of the marital bond, dwelling under the same roof, in a common relation to the same children that appeal to both alike in the helpless cry that comes from the cradle, that crawl and play about their feet in childhood, and grow up like olive-branches around their table, and you shall see that here are the conditions in which the parental consciousness is fully evolved. Instead of being a mere brute, living for his own gratification, the man overflows in generous hopes and efforts lavished upon his children. He is anxious for their good condition, and therefore labors and economizes—and from labor and economy comes property; he is solicitous for their security, both in person and property, and therefore unites with his neighbors in making and upholding just laws—and from this arises social order; he takes pride in their reputation, and so trains them to sentiments of honor and to a course of good behavior; he finds an exquisite gratification in their intellectual superiority, and will incur any pains and cost to provide for their education. To provide for all this, wealth must be increased, and so he begins to trade; from this comes commerce. From industry and com-

merce comes augmented wealth; and now the parental instinct yearns for expressions of the beautiful that may surround and gratify a cultivated offspring in their home—and art is patronized.

From property, and social order, and personal honor, and education, and commerce, and art, civilization arises. The motive-power that gives birth to all these is found in the sentiments and affections that exist in the family.

Now, add religion to all this: let the light of the Sabbath dawn upon the domestic hearth; let the holy day, with all that it imports, come into the house; let faith and the love of God crown the catalogue of virtues and affections already given; bring in the hope of immortality; let a portion of time be consecrated to God; one day in seven let the household be ordered exclusively for the honor of the Creator and for the praise of the Redeemer of men; let worship and charity monopolize this day. Thus will humanity be elevated to the plane of the unseen and the infinite; and humanity is never half conscious of itself until it knows itself in God. All the parade of a civilization that ignores God is a poor procession of puppets across a miserable stage. Morality, without the sanctions of divine authority and the inspiration of faith, is but the semblance of virtue—a body without life. Only God can so breathe into it that it can become a living soul; and this new creation is a divine work, wrought mainly through Sabbath influences in the family.

These two institutions—the family and the Sabbath—came out of the gates of Eden linked to-

gether; they cannot be disjointed. In the family the Sabbath has its chief expression, even more than in the house of God; for in the sanctuary there is often, on occasion, the same worship on other days as on that; but in the home there is no day like this one. No birthday nor holiday resembles it. It is an unseen but felt presence in every chamber and upon every heart; its touch is upon every face, and its tone in every voice; its light is purer than the light of common days, as if celestial beams were braided in with the rays that stream through the window or lie upon the threshold. The man-servant and the maid-servant rest, and even the horse and the ox roam in the pasture or sleep in the stall; the plane and the ax lie idle in the shop; the courthouse is closed; and every place of merchandise is still; human life has retreated from its contests. Men emerge from the door-way of home only to visit the house of God, and then return to commune with the Invisible at the domestic altar, and to rest. Here and now the heart gathers all its treasures together, and estimates them by a standard of values that finds its definition in such words as God and holiness, eternity and heaven.

Thus home and the Sabbath belong to each other. There can be no home, in the highest meaning of the word, without the Sabbath; and without the family and the home there could scarcely be a Sabbath at all upon the earth.

The family is the garden in which fruit ripens for immortality, and the Sabbath is the season of its culture.

The family is the training-school of souls for graduation in virtue and blessedness, and the Sabbath is the recitation-day.

In the family, through the influence of its pure affections, children are brought to Christ, and on the Sabbath they have nothing else to do, all the day long, but to receive his caresses and his blessing.

In the family the heavenly society is symbolized, and the Sabbath types its holy employments, its rest, and its peace.

In the family human society finds its highest expression, and the Sabbath brings it into actual kinship with the holy angels.

The Sabbath imports heaven into the household on earth, and then transports the family from its paradise on earth to the very heaven of heavens, where the Eternal Father shall gather the whole family into their final home. Then shall follow the day of rest no day of toil, and pain, and temptation, and conflict, and mean employment, but their Sabbath-keeping shall be forever and ever.

The Bright and Morning Star.

SERMON XVII.

“I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.” Rev. xxii. 16.

I NEED scarcely pause to say that the person speaking here is Jesus, and the language is metaphorical; but the metaphors—for there are several—are of easy interpretation and full of vital truth. They are descriptive—first, of the person of Christ, and, secondly, of his relation to his people.

I. *The person of Christ, as given in this text.*

1. “I am the Root of David”—that is, “I sustain to David the same relation a root does to the plant that grows out of it.”

The plant originates from the root; the beginning of life is there. So David’s life springs from Christ, and so, also, does all life and all being; for he is the Creator of all things, both visible and invisible. “All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.” Many passages concur in the affirmation of this fact. How

strikingly does the simple metaphor of the text put this great truth!

But this metaphor suggests a farther truth: the plant not only originates in the root, but is always after in vital dependence upon it. Severed from the root, it must perish instantly; it has no self-sustaining power, but all its sustenance is from the root.

This represents the close relation of the creature to the Creator. Creation is not the only point at which we are dependent on God; for he did not just make things, and cast them off to take their chances. He is not a mere machinist, who constructs his engine, and then has no more to do with it, but is rather in the relation of machinist and engineer, both; or, more accurately, he is in the vital relation of the root to the plant; for "by him all things consist." *Consist*—a most expressive word. "He upholdeth all things by the word of his power."

Let it not be said that God made all things, and established efficient *laws of nature* under which all processes go on since the beginning. What is a law? Is it mere *force*? Force is not an independent thing; for you cannot think of it by itself, but only as proceeding from some cause, and that cause, in the last analysis, will be found to be a person—a vital entity. If you regard law as simply *method*, this equally demands a person—a vital intelligence, and with the idea of *will* added; for any *procedure* on a method supposes will as well as intelligence. It is absolutely essential, as a condition of thought, that law suggests the legislator. This, if you consider it as a rule only; but if you consider it as a

rule actually in force, not only the legislator, but the executive, is suggested. The statutes of Missouri are law, because they contain and express the will of an existing State, and are enforced by the power of the State. If this body-politic—the State of Missouri—should be annihilated, any copy of its statutes surviving would furnish matter only for history; it would not be *law*.

The same is true of law in all forms of it, natural as well as civil; it is an expression of intelligence, will, and power. I have long been convinced that what we call the laws of nature are simply the method by which God is carrying on the affairs of the universe. The *force* which makes the method effectual proceeds immediately from him, as the intelligence that ordains the method is in him.

How inexpressibly precious to God's people is this sense of his immanence in nature, and his immediate guardianship and care of all! His word assures our faith most sweetly. He is near, taking minute oversight of all our affairs, and charging himself with all our concerns. "Your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him; for he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." Even the fall of a sparrow he follows with his pity, and men are of more value than many sparrows. So minute is his care, that "the very hairs of your head are all numbered." For his people all things work for good, so that every event of life enters into the ministries of grace—so close and vital is the relation

of the Creator to his creatures. "I am the Root of David."

But the text reveals the person of Christ in another light: he is the "Offspring of David." David is his ancestor; for he descended from him.

How is this? Can he be at once Root and Offspring, Creator and Son, of David? What a paradox is here! Do not these two propositions contradict each other? Then, one or both must be false; for no two truths can be in conflict with each other. That would be impossible; for truth, like light, travels in straight lines, and no two rays emanating from the same source can cross; but all truth emanates from God, and no two truths can ever cross each other's path.

Let us see about these diverse terms, the Root and the Offspring.

In the prophetic Scriptures there are two distinct and diverse classes of predictions respecting Messiah, the one class placing him above all conception of created power and dignity, and the other classing him with the most lowly and miserable.

Of the first class are such passages as these: "A King shall reign and prosper." "All kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him." "Prayer also shall be made for him continually, and daily shall he be praised." "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." "The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little.

Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Description exhausts itself; it can rise no higher. No other person is so glorious in the heavens or in the earth.

Yet in other passages he is represented as most abject. Take the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, throughout: "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men: a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." So lowly, so without form or comeliness was he to be.

How are these two classes of prophecies to be reconciled?

Let us turn to the gospel narratives, and see if any light may dawn upon us from them. Here we shall see two diverse classes of facts in the actual life of our Lord, answering precisely to the two classes of prophecies already cited. .

In one class of facts our Saviour appears as

amongst the lowliest of men. From his birth to his burial he was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. He was born in the miserable stall of Bethlehem. The offering of his parents in the temple was that which was allowed only to such as were too indigent to offer a lamb. This is proof of extreme poverty. While yet in his infancy he was a fugitive in Egypt. From his childhood he was reared in Nazareth of Galilee, in a household which was subsisted by the labor of a village carpenter, in which trade he was himself trained. During his public ministry he was a wanderer, and "had not where to lay his head." Chuza, the wife of Herod's steward, and other women who believed in him, "ministered to him of their substance." The great and rich despised him, except a few who believed secretly, but dared not acknowledge him lest they should lose caste. At last he is tried, condemned in the midst of a popular clamor, scourged publicly on the streets, buffeted, spit upon, jeered, and crucified. Despised of men! Yes, all that the prophets had intimated of a most lowly and depressed condition was fully met in the actual facts of his life.

But his life had another side, which the narratives keep in view from first to last. His birth, so humble as to the place, was attended with facts and portents befitting the advent of the most august personage of human history. "Wise men from the East" were guided by a star to Bethlehem, "till it came and stood over where the young Child was"—a celestial index pointing directly to the person of the glorious Child. "And there were in the same country shep-

herds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid." As the star guided the wise men, so angels came to the Judean shepherds to announce the good tidings of great joy which should be to all people: "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." A star from the visible heavens and an angel from the invisible announced his advent, and a jubilant host suddenly appeared, "praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men." His wisdom at twelve years of age amazed the doctors in the temple. At his baptism the heavens were opened, the Holy Ghost descended upon him, and God pronounced him his Son in an awe-inspiring proclamation. Thenceforth nature submitted herself to him, in all her powers and processes. Fierce winds hushed themselves under his voice; tempestuous waters were a pavement under his feet; the sources of life were commanded by his word. While he was on the cross the earth shuddered and broke her granite heart, and the sun disappeared in horror from the skies; and after he was dead and buried he rose again and ascended into the heavens, and now sitteth at the right hand of the Father, until he shall come again at the last day to judge the quick and the dead.

These two classes of incongruous facts in the life of Jesus answer exactly to the two classes of apparently discrepant prophecies concerning Messiah.

Is there any one point around which they may all cluster—any great fact that will bring them all into relation and harmony? There is.

It is the fact of the Incarnation. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." "In him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." "God was manifest in the flesh." As he was man, he inherited the lowliest condition; as he was God, he answered to the glowing picture of the prophetic pencil, in its divinest touches, and is, indeed, both the Root and the Offspring of David.

This is the wonder of the universe. God never related himself so vitally to angels. He took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of the woman. Fallen, debased humanity is thus distinguished above all other orders of being. It is the point at which God comes into special manifestation, and is thus in the closest relation to him of all created things. Thus humanity, in every redeemed individual of the race, is elevated to the very pinnacle of created being, and sin, so deadly in itself, becomes the occasion at once of the fullest expression of Godhead and the highest exaltation of the creature.

The God-man is the Mediator. So far as he is human, he is in deepest sympathy with us men. "He was tempted in all points like as we are," and is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." In our approach to him we do not call on one so far above us as not to be in sympathy with us, but upon one who

Knows what sore temptations mean,
For he hath felt the same.

Our prayer goes into a *human* ear; our grief touches a *human* heart. What assurance of interest in our case does this give! He cannot but be interested in us; for he is one of us. "He is very man"—no mere simulation of humanity; he is man in every essential fact of his nature, and in all the sensibilities and relationships of it. His love for us is human; it is not a mere pity that looks down upon us from some supreme elevation, but a love that feels *with* us as well as *for* us. We approach it without embarrassment or reserve; it is open to us, draws us, encourages us, assures us, by an actual fellowship of nature. In this respect how perfect is his adaptation to his office of Mediator with God in our behalf! There will be no sluggish inattention to our needs.

But in him the human is in immediate personal union with the divine; he is God. His mediation in our behalf is no feeble, inadequate human advocacy of our cause; but he appears for us with divine authority, and has a right to be heard in the counsels of the Trinity. He has authority to stand before the Father, and say, "I will," and he utters the sublime imperative in our behalf. "I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

Thus our prayer goes into a human ear, and, through human sensibilities, moves a divine power

in our interest. Even our sin raises no barrier against our approach to him; for he knows what *temptation* is. In him, indeed, is no sin; but he is separate from sinners; otherwise, he could be no Mediator with God for us. But he did go through all the experiences incident to a depraved condition; for he was even tempted to sin, and had that nature which exposed him to temptation. All the impulses which, unchecked, go on to sin were in his consciousness, and he, coming so near to us even as we are sinners, pities us with a human tenderness, and with all *that* interest becomes our "Advocate with the Father."

In his human nature he is most accessible to us. All the sensibilities of our nature relate us to him so as to make him open to us. Freely we come to him as to our own brother by blood, reared at the same hearth-stone; he is of our family; *he is one of us*.

And he is *one with the Father*, so that through him we come to God. If I should seek access to some august personage, whose good-will I desired to propitiate, did I but have a friend, a near kinsman, at once tenderly interested in me and having a powerful influence with the other party, *through him* I should find easy approach.

What I need above all things on earth, for time and for eternity, is to establish good relations with God; but I am in sin, and this constitutes a fatal interruption of my relations with God; it has made me odious in his eyes. Without a divine Friend, through whom I may come to him, I can never stand in his presence. But this Friend I have—Jesus, my

divine Kinsman, my Elder Brother—he has found means to propitiate the Infinite Throne, having shed his own blood to put away my sin; he is my Advocate with God, my Propitiation, my Peace-maker.

In my own character I cannot stand before God; for my character is most deeply polluted; but I approach the Father *through the Son*, and his holy character makes way for me. A felon can get the ear of a king if only some powerful friend of the monarch is interested in him. This is our case; there is a *common Friend* between the Father and us. The Son of the Eternal King, his only-begotten and well-beloved Son, is our Brother; he *mediates*—comes between the Father and us, to make reconciliation. The only fatal obstruction in the way—our guilt—he puts away by his own act of infinite love toward us, taking it upon himself and suffering the penalty of it. Having met the demand of justice upon us, the way of reconciliation is open, and *through his merit* we are received by the Father.

Our own name is but another word for sin, so that in our own name we cannot appear before God; but he has given us *his* name, and in that name we come to God. My own name may not be good for fifty cents; but if my friend, whose estate is good for fifty millions of dollars, grants me the use of his name, I shall get all I need, and my own signature becomes respectable as it stands along with his, so that with the utmost assurance I offer my paper for discount. Without *his* name the sense of my poverty would take away all hope, but *with* it I am full of confidence and joy.

The Son of God has given me the use of his name, and all the treasures of the Godhead are open to me.

I go to the ends of the earth; my friend in Nashville gives me a letter to *his* friend in India. I should appear before the stranger a mere vagabond if I were not accredited to him; but his friend has written, "Receive him for my sake, and as you would receive me," and signed it with his *name*, and whatever of hospitable regard the friend would command if he were there in person the stranger accredited by his name receives in his place.

I offer my poor prayers to the Father in the ever-blessed Name, and, commended by that Name, they command an audience. It is the name of the only-begotten Son; it is the name of the atoning Sacrifice; it has infinite merit of personal dignity, and infinite merit of sacrificial suffering; and I have full warrant to use and offer it in all my approaches to God. "Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he will give it you." "Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."

The whole method of grace hinges on the mystery of the Incarnation; and mediation finds its perfect expression in the relations of the divine Man—my Kinsman, and God's Son—joined to me in vital sympathy of blood on one side, and on the other commanding the ear of God in the glory which he had with the Father before the world was.

To say that the fact of the Incarnation is an inconceivable mystery, and therefore cannot be true, is at once puerile and illogical. Is nothing true

except that which is conceivable by me? Then, *nothing at all* is true! The sun does not shine; the grain of corn does not germinate; the wind does not blow; there is no life; there is nothing; for I do not comprehend any thing. It is of no consequence that we do not comprehend his being; but he is all in all to us, just because he is the Root and the Offspring of David—GOD, MAN, MEDIATOR.

II. *The text gives the relation of Christ to his people.* He is "the Bright and Morning Star."

In his relation to the moral world, the Lord Jesus is the true Polar Star. In the system of eternal truth he is at the central point. He embodies all essential virtue, and in his life and character exemplifies the great fact of divine holiness. "In him is light, and in him is no darkness at all." With the eye fixed on him, and conduct adjusted to his example, the soul is always safe. He who takes his reckonings on the sea of life by this Cynosure can never be cast away; he is the true Center around which all that is true and holy must revolve forever. He who is in the right relation to him is, in virtue of that fact, in right relations with all things else. But true and significant as all this is, it is not suggested by the metaphor of the text. Let us confine ourselves to that.

1. He is the *bright Star*—a Source of light; in fact, all the light we have, as to our spiritual life and its relations, emanates from him. No knowledge of divine things could be possible but through a direct revelation from God. The natural reason can never discover the secrets of creation and destiny. Why

we have any being, and what our relations to God may be; what he requires of us, and upon what conditions and penalties; what state of being we are to be in after death, or whether we are to exist at all after death—we can know only upon God's own assurance. Upon the great questions of sin and pardon we could never know any thing but by his word. That word he has given us *through the Son*; for he is the Medium of all revelation. He is, therefore, "the Light of the world." All we know of these matters, which are of such moment to us, comes to us from Christ. He is the only Light shining in these dark places—a blessed Radiance, opening to us secrets hid from the foundation of the world. But it is not the full light of day; it is but the light of a star; for we are yet but in the night-time of our being—the day has not yet dawned. How many facts are hid from us in thick darkness! How little do we know of the ways of God, even in those respects in which we are most vitally concerned! How strange are his providences! how inscrutable, and often most trying to our faith! The book of providence is all written in hieroglyph, and we have not the key by which to decipher it. How often death comes to the young, and pure, and happy, while long life and opportunity are given to the most vicious, whose influence is a deadly malaria! How often the virtuous and industrious suffer, while the unscrupulous triumph by means of their very vices!

Vast regions of divine truth, touching upon us on all sides, lie in impenetrable shadows that mock every effort of the eye. What secrets are hid there.

lying full in the scope of vision, if only we had light! How we long for the revelation of the unseen things! But, alas! we have only star-light; we see only as through a glass darkly. There is very little that we see distinctly and clearly.

But we are only travelers, and our great need is light sufficient to *discover the way*.

Star-light is sufficient for this. Blessed be God, we have light enough to travel by! Our bright Star is in an unclouded sky, the way is plain, and all the way-marks distinct. "The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." We are in a waste, howling wilderness, far from our Father's house, and our great desire is to make our way safe home. This is the supreme exigency of our life. We are strangers and pilgrims, as all our fathers were, in an enemy's land, and seek our way *home*—home, home, our beautiful home in heaven! When shall we sit down at the table there? when shall we hear the song of the angels and the voice of God? We must not tarry for sight-seeing by the way; we must hasten home, and the star-light discovers the way—it is all we need.

But O it *would* be such a joy as we travel if the beautiful landscape were only disclosed to us in a full light! Things appear in unreal shapes in this dim light; many objects seem to be monsters, which in the full light would be harmless and most beautiful. This company of goblins that sets my hair on end would prove, if the sun were up, to be a clump of wild roses in full bloom and fragrance. Beauty and grandeur are everywhere strewn over the wide

sweep of the landscape, and would regale our vision like a very Eden; but in this night and shadow we see naught but the outline of the boldest features; all the exquisite pencilings, all the sublimest glories of the scene are lost as we pass.

But, for the exigences of the way, we have all the light we need, and press onward in expectation of the coming day. We walk in the light we have, and press on in hope; for he is not only the *Bright*, but also,

2. "*The Morning Star.*" This is the star of hope—the herald of the approaching sun. The morning star assures us; the night is far spent when her beautiful face illuminates and adorns the eastern skies; the period of darkness will soon end; the dawn is at hand, and all the splendors of the perfect day approach.

I can never forget my first experience in watching with the sick. I was but a youth, and had an exaggerated sense of the awful nature of death. The wife of the sufferer, worn out with several nights of unaided nursing, retired and left the sole responsibility upon me. To my unpracticed eye the symptoms were alarming, and I knew not but that I should be a solitary witness of the death-struggle in the dead hours of the night. I handled the medicines with awe, not knowing what fatal effect might follow from any inadvertency or neglect. Sensibility was at its highest tension. The sufferer was restless and in great pain. There was no clock nor watch to index the progress of the night. It could have been scarce later than midnight when the pa-

tient asked, "Is n't it almost day?" I soothed him by such answer as I could make; but ever, at short intervals, there was the same unhappy chiding of the hours. How long they seemed to him, and not less so to me! Ever since that night I have known the longing and the agony of them that "wait for the morning." Time had lost his wings, and his very feet were lead.

"Is n't it almost day?" Again, and again, and again, the question came. I cast my eye upon the window opening toward the east, and replied, "No; the morning star is not up yet;" and the heavy hours still lagged over the fevered couch, and the silence and the darkness made a show of peace which mocked the fiery pulse and the hot brow.

"It *must* be day." What an agony was in the voice! "It must be day." "No; but it will be, soon, for the morning star is up." "Thank God!" exclaimed the sick man, with involuntary vehemence of grateful emotion. Was ever the herald of the morning more beautiful to mortal eyes than to mine, that long and dreadful night?

People of God, our Morning Star is already in the sky! How bright it is in the blue depths! how beautiful! What a lustrous peace it sheds upon the brow of night!

With some of you, brethren, the night has seemed dark and long—a night of doubts, and felt ignorance, and fears, and sicknesses, and bereavements, and temptations. You are even now walking in the shadows, among the graves of your dead. The air is chill, and the sighing of the winds in the pine-tops is

the dirge of a thousand buried hopes. The accompaniments of life are darkness and decay, and in the gloom even the beautiful flowers of hope by the wayside take on sinister shapes and repulsive aspects.

Lift up your eyes! The Morning Star is in the sky already, heralding the Eternal Sun. The day is at hand—the day of eternity, the day that shall never be dimmed by storms nor succeeded by night. The light of immortal life is just at the dawn. Death is now shortly to be swallowed up of life, as the glow of the sun consumes the darkness.

But we must die to enter into that light. The day does not come to *us*; we go into *it*. It is only in the deceptive appearance of things that the sun rises, while in fact it is our hemisphere that is turned over to the sun, and so into the light. So, also, in the spiritual domain; we are in the darkness because our hemisphere of existence is turned away from the Sun. But the momentum of Calvary is upon us, effecting that moral revolution upon the axis of our destiny which, even now while I speak, has brought the bright and morning star above the line of our horizon, and soon, bearing us beyond the gloom of a mortal condition, will bring us under the broad, blazing disc of the Sun of righteousness, whose beams shall irradiate for us all the abysses of truth and being.

Then shall we “see as we are seen, and know as we are known.” The gloom of ignorance, and doubt, and fear, and death, will disappear; for “there shall be no night there.” “What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.”

Then shall the worn traveler, at day-dawn, reach his Father's house. The star-illumined and painful journey ends in the morning. There was light sufficient for the way, but not for exploration. *Then* I had nothing else to do but to press my way onward; *now*, I shall have leisure and opportunity; now, in the light I shall explore all places of God's dominion, and revel in the glory of every landscape as it lies in the dewy radiance of the morning. All the perplexing problems of an inexplicable providence shall be made plain; I shall know why the tongue of the slanderer was permitted to make havoc of goodly names and rend the very Church of God; I shall understand the secret of baffled hopes and ruined fortunes; I shall know why my mother suffered so, and why my father was a son of grief; why my sister died at the threshold of early womanhood, and my eldest brother fell under the blight of fruitless effort and defeated expectation; I shall understand the mystery of that stroke under which my baby boys died upon the breast of their mother—the bud perishing with all the glory of its possibilities infolded in its bosom. My own fiery trials will be seen in their most gracious effect on character and destiny, and the glory of God will appear in the white light of its own spotless and infinite perfection of wisdom and love.

But until the day comes we must walk in the light of *hope*—the sweet radiance of peace and promise, the hallowed beams of the “BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR.”

The Fountain of the Water of Life.

SERMON XVIII.

"I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." Rev. xxi. 6.

ARE ideas innate? I preach to the common people as well as to metaphysicians, and as there are a great many more of the former than of the latter class, I may be said to preach to them chiefly. I shall, therefore, not attempt to use the word *ideas* in any other than what I suppose to be the meaning received by people of average intelligence. I mean by it the concept of things formed in the mind.

Nor is it my purpose to undertake any learned disquisition upon the doctrine of innate ideas. I have no objection to that doctrine, provided you will let me explain it. At any rate, the capacity of ideas is an essential attribute of our nature; but I doubt if any idea appears in consciousness as the simple result of innate power—at least, in any well-defined form.

If you can imagine an infant completely isolated

in space, and coming to maturity in years in that condition, you will see that it is impossible that it should ever have any ideas. Think of it as being afloat in space, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, touching nothing, and you will see that consciousness could amount to very little, especially if it were deprived of the power of touching its own members one against another. The ideas of a new-born child are all in a dormant, germinal state, and so must they remain forever, in the condition of absolute isolation which I have supposed. If you prefer to call them not ideas, but the mere capacity of ideas, I shall not quarrel with you. I choose to consider them ideas in the germ, awaiting conditions of fructification.

The one all-embracing condition of the development of ideas is *contact with the objective*. No man liveth to himself; no human life sufficeth for itself. We are so vitally related to that which is external to ourselves that consciousness depends, almost wholly, upon our relation to it. In absolute isolation there could be nothing more than the vaguest sense of *being*. Thrown back completely upon our own inward being, and not allowed to touch in any way upon objects external to ourselves, our consciousness, even of *self*, would be indistinct—so indistinct as to be scarcely real. We know even ourselves through that which is not ourselves. *Consciousness is conditioned upon contact with the objective.*

Through contact with the objective, *ideas are evolved into consciousness*; and ideas, which are the concepts of things, constitute the condition of all *thinking*.

Thus, by the active power of thought, from primary ideas we go on to all combinations of them, and all those resultant conditions, active and passive, which constitute the highest intellection; for it is not the mere passive receptivity of the objective which characterizes our being, but, in addition to this, a personal force which responds to the touch of outward things, and in the rebound goes on to active achievement, so that by a reproductive power it multiplies and yields an almost infinite progeny from the impregnating presence of the objective.

I doubt if even the primary ideas of space, and unity, and plurality, would ever appear in actual consciousness but through the medium of the objective; certainly, nothing beyond them could. You could have no notion whatever of color, or sound, or an existing world, except as the ideas of them were brought into realization through actual communication with the objects themselves. We discover objects and their qualities; we find them in units and in numbers; we see them isolated, grouped, related, and so get the basis of all intellectual conditions and processes. Once we have the conditions of mental activity, the inward power of action is incalculable; but those conditions are in the relation of the subjective and objective to each other.

Not only ideas, but the sensibilities, also—the passions, affections, tastes, sentiments, desires—come into consciousness by the same means. They do not rise spontaneously, but respond to the presence of an object. We should never know any such thing as anger but for some provoking encounter, nor of love

nor fear but for contact with such objects as awaken them. Only in the presence of actual beauty, as it is witnessed, or as the image of it is retained in the memory or reproduced and varied by the imagination, after having been once witnessed, is the sense of the beautiful realized. Every thing in the entire range of the sensibilities comes into consciousness through contact with the objective.

Farther, the presence of that which is external to us is the occasion of the formation of character. *Motives* come from without, and become active and efficient in the region of the sensibilities, and actions always contemplate somewhat that is outside of self. Conduct, good or bad, always has respect to others—persons or things around us, below us, or above us. How we are affected toward others, and how we deport ourselves with respect to them, must always determine our moral character. Motives excited by objects from without give occasion for the exercise of the *will*, and on its choices character hinges.

You see how vital the relation between the subjective and the objective is. What the type of consciousness in the individual is to be must depend largely upon his immediate surroundings; for the objects he is habitually in vital communication with must determine the prevalent states of consciousness. The child reared in the slums of a great city, surrounded on all sides, and perpetually, by such objects as excite the sensual nature, will inevitably take on a prurient form of consciousness; while another, sheltered from all that, and trained in a constant attention to objects which are pure and

incite to purity, will form the sense of honor and virtue.

Yet the effect is not merely mechanical in either case; for the mind is not only acted upon by external objects, but also reacts upon them, and it is the attitude the will takes, with respect to them, that determines character. We are not just passively recipient of the external. In many respects the receptivity is passive, but not in all; and let it be remarked that character is the resultant of the reciprocal action and reaction of the subjective and objective upon each other; in other words, it is the action of the *will*, involving the affectional nature toward that which is external to ourselves. Such objects as are contemplated with voluntary affection take vital hold upon our nature and assimilate it to themselves; but it protects itself against such as it rejects and repels.

We are not the mere sport of circumstances; yet, to a great extent, we are at their mercy. Children trained wrong are apt to go wrong; but trained in the way they should go, they will not depart from it when they are old. One of the most important and solemn facts of life is the influence which men exert upon each other, and especially parents on children. Where this ends and the power of volition begins I am sure I cannot tell; but it remains that the *will* is the pivot on which character turns; and so every one of us must give account of himself to God.

Another fact germane to the purposes of this discourse, and a correlative of what has been already set forth, is that we get all our enjoyments from with-

out. No man sufficeth unto himself in the matter of happiness, any more than in any other respect. As all forms of consciousness are conditioned upon contact with the objective, so this, of course, which we call happiness, as well as the rest. In the adjustment of the inward capacities and powers with related objects, and in reciprocation of contact and response, must all enjoyment be found. It does not arise out of interior fountains alone, but wells up from inflowing streams that pour in their supplies from a thousand sources—from nature, from man, and from God. The occasions of pleasurable emotion are always found in our *relations*; for even the contemplations of the mystic have an outward look, and all reflection and meditation have for their food supplies from without, even more than suggestions from within. He who lives most within himself yet lives in a consciousness that has been awakened by the touch of that which is exterior to himself.

To the objective, so far as it is contained in nature, we are related consciously through the medium of *sensation*. Many forms of consciousness, certainly, rise above the plane of the senses, and are realized in the sphere of abstract truth and the most refined esthetic and emotional sensibilities; but even to these altitudes it ascends from suggestions obtained in sensation. There are wonderful resources of power by virtue of which the soul, once supplied with the conditions of development, rises to amazing heights of achievement.

But the highest forms of consciousness do not result from contact with *nature*; for there are re-

sources within which can be reached only when we come to know God. The possibilities of inward power are stupendous; no doubt they transcend any thing we have yet conceived of. The Creator has supplied myriads of forms in nature, each one of which calls out some latent power when we touch upon it; but beyond all that there are unmeasured, immeasurable powers, that await the presence of *God himself* to call them into expression. The soul is never satisfied until it is in conscious communication with the Infinite.

We were made for God, and, blessed be his name, he does not withhold himself from us. He is the "Fountain of living waters," and he that drinketh of this water "shall never thirst," but it "shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." The purest, noblest character is formed only by the touch of God. Holiness comes of communion with him. None can shine in celestial purity but by the transforming presence of the Holy Spirit, and in personal holiness only can perfect blessedness be found; for the soul is too great in its capacities to be filled by aught else but God, and only a holy nature can be recipient of him.

As we touch upon nature in *sensation*, so we touch upon God in *faith*. He is above the domain of the senses; but faith reveals him and relates us to him in the most vital way, so that his presence thus realized evolves the deepest possibilities of our life into consciousness; so that thus, and only thus, we come to be all we were created to be, and our souls are flooded from the Infinite Fountain.

“Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.” “For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.”

Thus, out of the resources of his own being, God replenishes the soul that thirsts for him.

“I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.” His love is boundless as his nature, and upon his people he bestows himself
FREELY.

NOTE.—My exegesis of Rev. xxii. 16, in the Sermon on that text, goes upon the theory that it is to be interpreted in the light of the most natural meaning of the metaphors employed. There are many, however, who understand the terms “Root” and “Star” in the light, rather, of their symbolical import, as used in the prophetic writings of the Old Testament. I do not combat that interpretation, though I incline strongly to the one I have adopted. I see no ground of reasonable objection, however, to the other, and can well understand that both may be true. So our Lord’s language, in John xvii. 24—“Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am”—being in his sacerdotal prayer, may simply express “desire,” as some understand it, and not authority.

THE END.

